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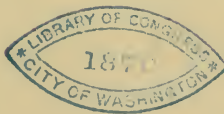




PASSION-FLOWERS.

By the Author Wood ✓
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[3d ed.]



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POEMS.

SALUTATORY.

I.

TO THE POETS.

BROTHER and sister poets dear!
Ye of the high, impassioned few,
A pilgrim waits your tender grace,
A wand'ring minstrel would sing with you.

I have not sat at the heaven-spread board,
Nor worn the fillet of glossy bays,
I have but hearkened your song without,
And gone, refreshed, on weary ways.

I was born 'neath a clouded star,
More in shadow than light have grown ;
Living souls are not like trees
That strongest and stateliest shoot alone.

Comfort me as a child of Art
That Sorrow from her mother stole,
And sent, to cross the threshold of life,
Orphaned in heart, and beggared in soul.

I have sung to lowly hearts
Of their own music, only deeper ;
I have flung through the dusty road
Shining seeds for the unknown reaper.

I have piped at cottage doors
My sweetest measures, merry and sad,
Cheating Toil from his grinding task,
Setting the dancing rustics mad.

Kindly though their greetings were,
They were far from my race or kin ;
But I passed the loftier porch,
Fearing not to be let in.

Better to sit at humble hearths,
Where simple souls confide their all,
Than stand and knock at the groined gate,
To crave — a hearing in the hall.

Oh! ye wingèd ones — shall I stand
A moment in your shining ranks?
Will ye pass me the golden cup?
Only tears can give you thanks.

Without gracious ears to hear,
Languidly flows the tide of song —
Waters, unhelped of bank or brake,
Slowly, sluggishly creep along.

We must measure from mankind,
Know in them our fancies true;
Echo gives us each high-strained sharp,
Teaches us tune the harp anew.

Ere this mystery of Life
Solving, scatter its form to air,
Let me feel that I have lived
In the music of a prayer,

In the joy of generous thought,
Quickening, enkindling soul from soul ;
In the rapture of deeper Faith
Spreading its solemn, sweet control.

Brothers and sisters ! kind indeed —
Ye have heard the untutored strain ;
Through your helpful cherishing,
I may take heart to sing again —

Sing and strike, at high command,
And keep sacred silence too ;
Not too greedy of men's praise,
When I know I am one of you.

If the headsman of our tribe,
(The stern Reviewer, friends, I mean,)
Bring me bound in the market-place,
Then, like mournful Anne Bolèyn,

I will stretch my slender neck,
Passive, in the public view ;
Tell him with a plaintive smile,
That his task is easy to do.

II.

TO MY MASTER.

Thou who so dear a mediation wert
Between the heavens and my mortality,
Give ear to these faint murmurs of the heart,
Which, upward tending, take their tone from thee.
Follow where'er the wayward numbers run,
And if on my deserving, not my need,
Some boon should wait, vouchsafe this only meed,
Modest, but glorious — say, 'Thou hast well done.'

I've wrought alone — my pleasure was my task :
As I walk onward to Eternity,
It were a trivial thing to stand and ask
That my faint footsteps should remembered be ;
Of all Earth's crownings, I would never one
But thine approving hand upon my head,
Dear as the sacred laurels of the dead,
And that high, measured praise, 'Thou hast well done.'

III.

TO FRIENDS AND FOES.

Ye fleeting blossoms of my life,
The promise of diviner fruit,
Forgive, if I enrich with you
The cypress garland of my lute.

Too closely are ye linked with me,
Too much in mine your being blends,
That I in song should cast you off,
And sing myself, and not my friends.

Some of you tread this vernal earth,
And some in mystic soul-land move ;
In these, I hold all holy truth,
In those, attain to heav'nly love.

And ye who, rankling in my path,
Have torn my feet, and pierced my side,
Holding the eager pilgrim back
To suffer wounded love and pride ;

Forgive if I, whom Nature made
Vengeful in none of my desires,
Have in my harmless chaplet bound
Your sharp and bitter forms, ye briars !

Forgive as I forgive, and own
As feels the heart, so falls the lot ;
My flowers of life were loving friends ;
My thorns were those who loved me not.

ROME.

I KNEW a day of glad surprise in Rome,
 Free to the childish joy of wandering,
 Without a 'wherefore' or 'to what good end?'
 By querulous voice propounded, or a thought
 Of punctual Duty, waiting at the door
 Of home, with weapon duly poised to slay
 Delight, ere it across the threshold bound.
 I strayed, amassing wild flowers, ivy leaves,
 Relics, and crusted marbles, gathering too
 Thoughts of unending Beauty from the fields,
 The hills, the skies, the ancient heathen shrines
 Transfigured in the light of Christian day.
 Coaxed by soft airs, by gentlest odors flattered,
 Conquered at last by the all-conquering sun,
 My heart its sadly cherished silence brake,
 And its long sealèd tides flowed forth in song,
 While bounding feet in gladdest rhythm moved.
 For never do I walk abroad so well
 Enwrapped from wintry blast, or from fierce heat

Of summer shaded, as when I may move
To the free cadence of mine own wild singing.
Nature on that fair day bestowed a grace
More than maternal. If, at its high noon
Young angels, from their heavenly school dismissed,
Had made their play-ground on that Roman earth,
Methinks, they would have sorrowed to return,
Mingling unwonted tears with dews of eve.
But the Day waned, and soft as love in death
Bequeathed her admonition, warning me
Back to the shelter of my Roman home,
Where with my children, at the open window,
In the soft purple scarf of twilight folded,
I sate, and through the gathering dimness saw
Mystical shapes, that deepened into joy.

And thus I mused: there is a feast to-night
At such a palace, spread for high-born dames,
Princes, and dignitaries of the church.
There will be light and music, fit for those
Who make the music and the light of life —
The glancing wine-cup, and the stately dance —
All glory of rich tissues, wondrous webs,
And those white shoulders English women show.
There, ere so far we pass, the courtly whist
At which the humblest Cardinal may sit,
And illustrate his Christian poverty.

Mirrors and diamonds flash the brilliance back
 That emulates the clearer hue of day ;
 And Night is only in Italian eyes,
 That take in light as the stars give it out,
 Till they grow introspective, and reveal
 Slumbering within, volcanic depths of nature,
 How still when still, how passionate when roused.
 Such will the feast be, (Oh! bethink you, friends!)
 And I am bidden thither !

Gold and gems

I cannot show ; if even my hair and eyes
 (Now fading in the grasp of Time) had well
 Deserved the ancient praise that named them so ;
 But in serenity of white attire
 Folded transparent, I can fitly go,
 Wearing my native courage on my bosom
 That will not dim for Prelate nor for Prince.
 And to that tainted atmosphere of courts
 Where new corruption ever crowds, albeit
 All words and ways are so embalmed by use
 That men are born half mummied, I shall bring
 Rosy, the woodland breath of Liberty
 From my far home, where men live as they list,
 And only trees are victims.

I pursued

Further, in thought, my new-commenced career.
 The winter, like a college boy's vacation,

Seemed endless to anticipate, and lay
Stretched in a boundless glittering before me,
Unfathomable in its free delight.
Or if horizon-bounded like the sea,
I saw new seas beyond — the sweeping line
Limits the known, but not the possible.

But what sad sight is this? I looked across
The street, up towards the cresting of the hill,
And there, before a humble door, beheld
Two men arrive, that bore a scanty coffin
Of frailest wood and meanest fashioning.
They entered in the shadow Death had left,
And soon emerged with heavier steps, as bearing
One who should bear the weight of life no more,
Abandoned to his ghastly solitude,
As is the Roman custom. Only here
Wealth stood not in the room of tenderness,
Granting its escort of funereal pomp
On the brief journey to oblivion.
Here was no gorgeous pall, no garland pale;
Here thronged no Capuchins, with livid flare
Of torches, (which, however held, will drop
Wax on the paper held by thievish boys,)
Nor mumming penitents, that frighten babes,
Nor priest to fellow-priest responding deep.
Only a dingy Acolite, with dull

And leaden brow, walked sturdily along
After the wooden cross. No solemn dirge
Startled the heart with words of hope and judgment,
To wail of wounded Nature set — scarce might
I catch the ominous mumbling of a prayer,
As the sad pilgrim hurried to his shrine
Adown the sloping street.

But from that house
(I never learned who lived and died therein)
Or ere I knew, the lengthening shadow fell
Upon the dial of my life, and there
Marked the swift wearing of its day. As sure
As chimes of Heaven ring out the hour of man,
So surely, then, I heard that I must die.
And as the mystic whisper crept to me,
Methought the flowers about my room turned faint,
And the light texture of my festal robe,
That seemed to dream of floating in the dance,
Grew dank and heavy, as the linen shroud
That binds dead hearts, and with enduring fibre
Outlasts the wasting of their nobleness,
While I, careering onward, high in hope
Was held to pause and tremble. I have been
In dangers of the sea and land, unscared ;
And from the narrow gates of childbed oft
Have issued, bearing high my perilous prize
(The germ of angel-hood, from chaos rescued,)

With steadfast hope and courage ; but this once
My heart so failed me, I was fain to turn
For comfort to the Nurse, and question thus :
' Must I leave all my treasures, all my loves,
And, like yon wretched corpse, be coldly laid
Beyond sweet Nature's daily miracle ?'
She, with true Quickly cheeriness replied :
' There is no need to think about it now,
' So do not fret you, Madam ' — but I sat
Till twilight darkened into night, and till
The gracious children dropped in sleep, and heard
Ever those threat'ning words, ' Thou too shalt die.'

A day of fuller joy arose for me
When the young Spring-tide came, and dark-eyed boys
Bound violets and anemones to sell.
The later light gave scope to long delight,
And I might stray, unhaunted by the fear
Of fever, or the chill of evening air,
While happiest companionship enriched
The ways whose very dust was gold before.
Then the enchantment of an orange grove
First overcame me, entering thy lone walks
Cloistered in twilight, Villa Massimo !
Where the stern cypresses stand up to guard
A thousand memories of blessedness.
There seemed a worship in the concentrate

Deep-breathing sweetness of those virgin flowers,
Fervid as worship is in passionate souls
That have not found their vent in earthly life,
And soar too wild untaught, and sink unaided.
They filled the air with incense gathered up
For the pale vesper of the evening star.
Nor failed the rite of meet antiphony —
I felt the silence holy, till a note
Fell, as a sound of ravishment from heaven —
Fell, as a star falls, trailing sound for light ;
And, ere its thread of melody was broken,
From the serene sprang other sounds, its fellows,
That fluttered back celestial welcoming.
Astonished, penetrate, too past myself
To know I sinned in speaking, where a breath
Less exquisite was sacrilege, my lips
Gave passage to one cry : God ! what is that ?
(Oh ! not to know what has no peer on earth !)
And one, not distant, stooped to me and said :
‘ If ever thou recall thy friend afar,
Let him but be commemorate with this hour,
The first in which thou heard’st our Nightingale.’

Nor only to these holy solitudes
My willing feet made duteous pilgrimage :
The growing warmth unlocked for me the gates
Whence Rome once issued to subdue the world,

And, following in her footsteps, I might see
Where erst she strode forth towards the unknown waste,
Her splendor felt itself empowered to fill.
How widely overflowed her noble soul,
Too great and generous to contain itself,
Gathering glory from the East, and then
(With kindred instinct of all luminous things)
Craving an outlet in the Northern night,
As if its depth alone could give her scope.
But the dim North had other laws than hers,
And took not from her will its destiny ;
Its darkness swallowed up the light she gave
And seemed to quench it. But, as none can tell
Among the sunbeams which unconscious one
Comes weaponed with celestial will, to strike
The stroke of Freedom on the fettered floods,
Giving the spring his watchword — even so
Rome knew not she had spoke the word of Fate
That should, from out its sluggishness, compel
The frost-bound vastness of barbaric life,
Till, with an ominous sound, the torrent rose
And rushed upon her with terrific brow,
Sweeping her back, through all her haughty ways,
To her own gates, a piteous fugitive —
A moment chafing at its limits there
To enter in, resistless, and o'erwhelm,
With heavy tides of death, her struggling breast.

Begule me not to flights like this, thou Past
That, forced to abdicate the rod of rule,
Stretchest the wand of favor to our love,
And temptest souls from thy magnificence.
Here, on the ruins of the Ancient world,
Thou sittest, like a harlot, to entrap
The manifold human heart with various gifts.
The poet, tender fool, must pause to wave
Aside thy shadowy veil, and gaze into
Thy melancholy eyes, that rivet him,
And yield his reason to thy wildering rhyme :
He sinks beside thee, looking, listening, longing,
And thou hast stolen the darling of the Age
That to his mother's breast returns no more.

The despot, that engirds with bristling thorns
Broad meadow lands of gracious human growth,
That they may yield their golden wealth at will
To wither in his prison granary —
Harvesting ruthlessly with headsman's axe,
And sword unknightly, whose death-angels pause
And with slow fingers bind the immortal sheaves,—
He, hurrying in his greed of power and wealth,
Sees in thine hand unrighteous title-deeds,
And stops to bargain. Soon the compact's signed,
Empty of justice, not to sense aspiring,
But with a formula defying Heaven

That smiles down hope and promise, and the law
That metes the liberal sunshine equally.
Thou giv'st him right to wrong his fellows much,
Himself more, and God's image most of all.
Thou hast him, purchased at his own vile price,
And those who weep, waste not their tears on him.

Or yonder monkling, in unmanly garb,
With sturdy limbs fed fat in idleness,
Whose hands scorn labor, as his brain hates thought,
These stretched for alms, that busy with deceit,
Who trails from door to door his beggary,
Devoutest praying, where the housewife's fair.
He is an image of thy modelling,
Spawn of a ruder age, as one might say,
Some generations nearer brutes than we.
Shall he thrive on, upheld of thee, and live
A life that were a sanctimonious lie,
Had it but truth enough to be a lie?
Shall he still cheat the poor with demon fables,
And glittering trash, that holds the place of God?
Shall God himself, known through such medium,
Be held in horror of the human heart,
Whose inborn yearning for the love divine
Congeals, before the vengeful portraiture,
To terror, and estrangement wide as life?

Oh then, roll further back thy chariot wheels,
Even to the Ghetto of the hated Jew ;
In his poor synagogue's simplicity
Faith enters not in Fancy's masquerade
Accoutred for religion's revelry.
His Rabbi nothing adds or takes away,
Nothing assumes of mystic right or power,
But gives the ancient venerable word
With cautious lips and emphasis devout,
(Intent on reading as his fathers read,)
As if believing *it*, not he, should teach.
He has the oracles that Jesus loved,
Though suffering still Tradition's jealous hand
To bind too closely o'er the face of Truth
Her veil of Oriental tracery,
Which that serene One smilingly looks through,
Sure of her own and God's eternity.
From Sinai's height great Moses gives him laws ;
He hears, as we, vibrating endlessly
The golden harp-strings of the poet-king,
While wondrous, widely gifted Solomon
Teaches his quaint philosophy of life,
And pictures passion holier than prayer.
Still in his prophets reading history,
He waits the Christ whom Christians show him not,
Waiting with infinite loss, yet in one thing,
One only, happier than they — his faith

Enfolds intact in its integrity,
One treasure, which lies brokenly in theirs,
The deepest lesson of his Eastern skies,
Th' inviolable unity of God.

Still to the spirit of the Past I speak
As I discerned it there, in fateful league
With wanton weakness, selfishness and sin.
'No good survives the fitness of its time,
The semblance of the most transcendent form
That Friendship ever mourned in burial,
Should it revisit us with church-yard damps
And deathly odors scattering from its hair,
Were but a thing of ghastliness and dread
Fit for exorcisement. Thou hadst thy day,
And in it thy degree of grace and glory ;
But now, rebellious to thy doom of change,
Thou throwest grimly on thy catafalque,
While Rome, that were as fragrant as God's Eden,
Could Nature only have her freshening way,
Must still exhale thee, shuddering, to the world,
Condemned to propagate the germ of death
Which thy decay holds festering in her heart.

'Thou vampire Beauty, own that thou art dead,
Nor bind thy hollow brows with flowers of youth

That wither as they touch thee. Yield to us
The wealth thy spectral fingers cannot hold;
Bless us, and so depart, to lie in state,
Embalmed thy lifeless body, and thy shade
So clamorous now for bloody holocausts
Hallowed to peace, by pious festivals.'

But from these reasonings, that far outstrip
The knowledge and the wisdom of a child,
Let me descend to chronicle my steps
In that enchanted region — steps that take
A moment's grandeur from the ground they trod,
Though else pursuing with uncertain stride
Ways of obscure and mean significance.
I saw the outposts, where Rome's wider growth
Invited wider ruin, crumbled now,
Till Ruin's self needs History's blazonment
To be remarked, so closely does she hug
The charitable weeds that Time's remorse
Flings back, to hide what he makes devastate.

I saw Albano, Ostia, Tivoli,
The Sybil of the temple, spreading still
Her silent, awful oracle before
The crownèd Iris of the waterfall,
Who, from her crystal columns opposite,
Smiles promise back for mournful 'monishing,

And when she flies, flies heavenward, nor leaves
More earthy record than the glittering tears,
In which the gladness of her soul dissolves,
And, thrilling through th' unconscious element,
The deep pulsation of a deathless heart.

Other, at times, that downward torrent seemed
A daring Sappho leaps she from the rock,
Maddened of faithless sunshine, fleeing it.
In the abyss is peace, and she shall sleep
Treasured in darkness, garnered up in gloom.
But, sharing the impulsive ecstasy,
Love leaps with her — his slender arms of steel
Enlacing what his rainbow wings uphold.
Now, vain her furious flight, her struggle vain,
The sunshine overtakes her desperate course ;
Her madness is unhealed, she cannot rest,
For Love, in sunshine, follows every where.

Forgive imperfect types, that strive to show
How the fixed Sybil sits there and decays,
While leaping, loving human life flows on,
And, plunging down to Chaos, is not lost.

I saw l'Ariccia, where the artist's soul
Revels in light and color magical,

Nor feels the dearth of thought, where nought transpires,
Save steady growth of men and plants alike.
Studies of leaves and grasses, fervid tints,
And purple mountain shadows, wile for him
Too soon the silent, sultry summer day,
Gorgeous in all its changes ; if he wish
A tenant for his painted Paradise
He summons up, to fill the golden void,
Such stately forms and shadowings of life
As with the look and gesture startle us,
Seen in the coldness of our sombre walls,
And make us tremble strangely, as a veil
Were for a moment merely lifted there,
And all the burning beauty of the South
Were near us, like Eternity, unguessed.

And often, when I've seen the twilight drape
Her folds of sadness o'er the wide domain
Of the Campagna, desolate with tombs,
(Itself a monumental wilderness,)
I've pondered thus : ' Perhaps at midnight here
Wakes the quiescent city of our day,
A Juliet, drunken with her draught of woe,
And wildly calls on Love's deliverance
Writhing in her untimely cerements,
And stiffens back to silence when she hears :
' Love has no help, save that which waits on Death.'

Oh no ! more piteous still, a mazèd child,
Bereft in parentage and destiny,
She wanders, stopping at these stones, to trace
Through wreck and rust of ages, signs that prove
Her filiation to the mighty sires
Whose grim ghosts scare her slumbers, pointing hither.
She feels the kingly impulse of her race,
(For next to soul is sense of generous blood,)
But, too unskilled to construe of herself,
Can only crouch when strangers call her, *Changeling*,
And on the weak, unwilling hand enforce
Their gift of shame, a Bondmaid's heritage.

These days wore on more rapidly than such
As Winter loads with leaden sluggishness,
Abridged of light, but lengthened out with care ;
And, while I dreamed that they should never end,
They were already ended in my view.
Then, as perforce, I gathered up all strength
For the uprooting of my vine of life,
So clinging, creeping, craving from men's hands
A gracious culture, loving so to grow
And bear the fruit God gave it right to bear
As genial tribute to Love's genial care ;
I felt the sudden, earnest wish for death
Shoot like a subtle poison through my veins.

Oh now ! I cried ; in these full golden hours,
Let me set sail, and bend my course for heaven.
Oh God ! I am too happy not to be
Admitted there — I can but end in thee ;
Not elsewhere tends this tide of blessedness.
But, if I must await the tedious ebb
And day's decline, I shall but be a wreck
That whitens, stranded on the shore, and mocks
The pilot's skill, with bare dismantled ribs,
While shattered mast and shredded banner point
To the rich freight surrendered to the deep.
As I prayed thus, I wrestled with myself
And wrenched my hands, by loving friends held back
Till they were free, and stretched on high to God
Who took them.

As by an electric chain,
The mystical conjunction showed to me
The twilight street, of only six months gone,
The lonely coffin, the ungracious priest,
And the worn pilgrim, carried to his rest ;
And the same voice, which, as a silver bell
Chimed out the numbers of men's fate in heaven,
Uttered again what then a menace seemed,
But what was now a promise — 'Thou shalt die.'

Have patience with me, on the seaward way
I linger, for one gesture of farewell.

The bridge is crossed that led, oh path of peace!
To holy vespers in the twilight aisle.
The gate is closed — the air without is drear.
Look back! the dome! gorgeous in sunset still —
I see it — soul is concentrate in sight —
The dome is gone — gone seems the heaven with it.
Night hides my sorrow from me. Oh, my Rome,
As I have loved thee, rest God's love with thee!

PIO NONO.

THOU should'st have had more faith! thy hand did shed
 The seed of Freedom in the field of God,
 But the last peril drove thee from thy bounds,
 And stranger feet the unripe harvest trod.

Thou should'st have had more faith! thy crown was
 hung,
 High-pitched, upon a sharp and thorny tree;
 We saw thee wrestle bravely with the boughs,
 But the last buffet did dishearten thee.

Thou should'st have had more faith! the voice of Christ
 Called thee to meet him, walking on the wave;
 Thou should'st have trod the waters as a path,
 Such power divine thy holy mission gave.

Shoreward thy recreant footsteps turn, and sink ;
In vain the heavenly voice, the outstretched arm,
Thou heed'st not, though a God doth beckon thee,
Binding the billows with a golden charm.

Where Glory should have crowned thee, failure whelms,
Truth judges thee, that should have made thee great ;
Thine is the doom of souls that cannot bring
Their highest courage to their highest fate.

SANTA SUSANNA.

A SILENT longing drew me towards the church —
Not in the hour when votaries throng its aisles,
When tinkling mass-bells teach us kneeling-time,
And prayers that boast despair are breathed with smiles.

Not while the gilded steps of Fashion fall
And her full train sweeps by in crimson state,
But when the peasant-mother, with her child,
Presses her sun-stained brow against the grate.

Or oftener yet, no worshipper was there.
Thus, ere the chant of evening should begin,
I left the vesper of the world without,
And with me went the gentle twilight in.

In lustral water I imbued my hands,
By some unholy contact chance-defiled ;
Washed from my brow the trace of evil thought ;
From lips, what they amiss had said or smiled.

I knelt to pray, then, flinging far away
Life's garden weeds, that throng our footsteps free,
Choking the seed by angels strewn, to bear
The flower of Hope for Joy that is to be.

This was my shrift, a breathing after God,
A shuddering, rapid glance adown the past,
Turned heavenward ere its spectral forms could rise,
And, with pale chiding, set my soul aghast ;

A sacrifice of expiation sought
For every wilful error of my life,
A plea like this : ' Bethink thee, by thy will
Th' immortal breath took this poor flesh to wife.

' Were they for suffering and for evil wed,
High priest of Nature, bear with me the blame !
But if for purposes of love and good,
Help ! raise me from this bed of sloth and shame !'

Then, silence — then the touch of angels' wings
Winnowed away that bitter grief and doubt ;
And then I left my twilight thoughts within,
And with me bore Faith's earnest twilight out.

A PICNIC AMONG THE RUINS OF OSTIA.

SAY they, a famous seaport town?
 One look abroad I bid thee cast,
 Then tell me if thou canst descry
 A dwelling here, or there a mast.

Of all its old magnificence
 Stands one poor skeleton of brick ;
 With grass are sown the hidden streets,
 The palace ploughed in furrows thick.

And this the temple of a God,
 The body of a mighty thought !
 Here vowed the heart, elate with hope,
 When priests the struggling victim brought —

Hearts like these hearts of ours, that drink
Existence as an endless cup,
And smile to hear of an abyss
Where life and strength are swallowed up.

These men our brothers were, but built
Of sturdier frame and mind than we ;
Tamed by their will, th' unruly flood
Led their proud galleys to the sea.

Walk further, let my guidance show
One crumbling tower of Trajan's port :
Strange that Christ's vicar, God-inspired,
Has never had as wise a thought.

But we, at Vecchia's hostel left,
Drag on to Rome our bags and baggage,
While the Dogana, cringing low,
Wonders that Englishmen are savage !

Within the ruined temple's shade
Spread the white cloth, for we incline
To revel in the glorious past,
But in the present tense to dine.

Flirt on, young lady, doze, old lord,
While I my slender museling nurse
With fragments of Horatian odes,
Or with the grand old Goethe's verse.

Fall too, my friends, in Bacchus' name,
And make me, if you will, his priest —
That was a proper sort of God
Who thought not scorn to bless a feast :

For his divinity, of old
Hearing us call, had hastened hither,
And sat, till votary and god
Reeled homeward, drunkenly, together.

Pour the libation ! see, how lights
The Capri, in this cup of mine !
Drink to those ancient heathen fools
Who mixed sea-water with their wine —

And in that pledge forget with me
The sorrow of the wanderer's star,
The sigh for that we might have been,
The lonely grief at that we are.

What boots it, brothers? had we lived
In utmost valor, utmost bliss,
Tamed mighty nations, built great towns,
Time would have brought our works to this.

Or had some graceful fragment cast
Its shadow to a distant age,
Barbarians whom we never knew
Had squabbled for our heritage.

See, the fierce charioteer of Day
Drives to the wave his smoking steeds ;
The world may breathe, the tyrant drops
The lash, the slave no longer bleeds.

And soft the pious Evening steals,
To watch her fiery father's rest ;
A whispered *Avè* seems her voice,
And one pure gem hangs on her breast.

As yonder sun, an exiled king,
Each day his slumbering world retakes,
And from the dark domain of Night,
As sure as God, his conquest makes ;

So the immortal principle,
That fills Creation with its breath,
Daily from rudest chaos wrings
Souls which, like ours, can laugh at death.

THE CITY OF MY LOVE.

SHE sits among th' eternal hills,
Their crown, thrice glorious and dear ;
Her voice is as a thousand tongues
Of silver fountains, gurgling clear ;

Her breath is prayer, her life is love,
And worship of all lovely things ;
Her children have a gracious port,
Her beggars show the blood of kings.

By old Tradition guarded close,
None doubt the grandeur she has seen ;
Upon her venerable front
Is written : 'I was born a Queen !'

She rules the age by Beauty's power,
As once she ruled by armèd might ;
The Southern sun doth treasure her
Deep in his golden heart of light.

Awe strikes the traveller when he sees
The vision of her distant dome,
And a strange spasm wrings his heart
As the guide whispers : ' There is Rome !'

Rome of the Romans ! where the Gods
Of Greek Olympus long held sway ;
Rome of the Christians, Peter's tomb,
The Zion of our later day.

Rome, the mailed Virgin of the world,
Defiance on her brows and breast ;
Rome, to voluptuous pleasure won,
Debauched, and locked in drunken rest.

Rome, in her intellectual day,
Europe's intriguing step-dame grown ;
Rome, bowed to weakness and decay,
A canting, mass-frequenting crone.

Then th' unlettered man plods on,
Half chiding at the spell he feels ;
The artist pauses at the gate,
And on the wondrous threshold kneels.

The sick man lifts his languid head
For those soft skies and balmy airs ;
The pilgrim tries a quicker pace,
And hugs remorse, and patters prayers.

For ev'n the grass that feeds the herds,
Methinks, some unknown virtue yields ;
The very hinds in reverence tread
The precincts of the ancient fields.

But wrapt in gloom of night and death,
I crept to thee, dear mother Rome ;
And in thy hospitable heart
Found rest and comfort, health and home,

And friendships, warm and living still,
Although their dearest joys are fled ;
True sympathies that bring to life
That better self, so often dead.

For all the wonder that thou wert,
For all the dear delight thou art,
Accept an homage from my lips,
That warms again a wasted heart.

And, though it seem a childish prayer,
I've breathed it oft, that when I die,
As thy remembrance dear in it,
That heart in thee might buried lie.

A PROTEST FROM ITALY.

I.

THERE.

AMID Italian orange groves
 A distant murmur reached mine ear,
 The wrangling tongues of Western men,
 Each crossed at arms with his compeer.

In that fair land, where passions rage
 Briefly, through Nature's gentleness ;
 Where the black eyebrows' direst frown
 Must yield to the soft air's caress ;

Where even curses fall in words
 Whose beauty heals the wound they make ;
 (Though strong to feel, those Southern hearts,
 They're timid to o'erturn and break ;)

I felt my life so calm and deep,
Such rapture, settling to such peace,
I sighed: 'Hush! hush! my countrymen —
Let this untempered babbling cease!

'Ye who assert your rights in men,
What right is worth such evil blood?
You — frantic champions of the slave,
Bethink — God orders all for good.

'Shake not thus ruthlessly your cup
Of new-fermented liberty,
Till the scum mantle to the top,
And leave the sun-touched liquor free.

'Northern and Southron, part in peace,
Each to his own contentment thrive,
Since each divergent destiny
May keep a sacred good alive.'

Thus sang I in that land of rest,
Till, drunk with Music's golden wine,
I crossed my hands upon my breast,
And dreamed of heaven at Raphael's shrine.

II.

HERE.

Bathed in your icy Northern springs,
My slumbering eye is roused to sight ;
The sharp steel wind doth sunder all
My silken armor of delight.

Mine ear, by mass and anthem lulled,
The trumpet's brazen voice awakes ;
From its slow pulses, keenly stirred,
My blood its natural current makes.

Things which in distance dimly showed
Press on me in the nearer view ;
I see the race that's passing out
Weave hateful fetters for the new.

I see a plague, long held aloof,
That to the social heart hath crept,
See blood-hounds track the inner shrine
Where, sacred once, the outcast slept.

I see, upon the altar steps,
Base Interest trample Godlike Right.
Strike, lyre, thy chorus of brave sounds !
Find, palsied hand, thine ancient might !

Back ! back, volcanic flood ! that creep'st
So snakelike through our peaceful plains ;
Back, tortuous Intrigue ! thou art bold
To drop thy mask where Justice reigns.

Back, baleful force ! back, perjured law !
Sacred while ye the right sustain,
But fallen like Judas, to betray
The sinless blood for love of gain.

Judas ! that gain will serve thee nought !
It will but buy a field of blood,
Whereon impartial Time shall write,
' Here they that fought for Freedom stood.

' These men the tie of Nature held,
A claim beyond the pride of race ;
Their banner bore Man's bleeding heart
Without the color of his face.

‘ Reluctantly they bared the sword,
And let the prudent scabbard go ;
They perished in the name of Christ ;
His enemies would have it so.’

III.

THERE AND HERE.

The natural loves that move my heart,
My country, matter not to thee ;
Yet let me to my words impart
That which may make them one with me.

And tell thee that, however dear
I hold the light of Roman skies ;
However from the canvas clear
The soul of Raphael blessed mine eyes ;

Howe'er intense the joy of flowers,
And the spring-wedded nightingale,
Or deep the charm of twilight hours
Hushed to the Miserère's wail ;

A holier joy to me were given,
Could I persuade thy heart from wrong;
As rapturous birds drop down from heaven,
With heaven's convincement in their song.

WHEREFORE.

WHY fell not Kossuth with the fall of his country?
 Wherefore yielded he not to the blind inspiration
 Of the cup with which Despair her own agony heightens
 To madness, that traces no longer the progress of sor-
 row,

Swells to one spasm, exhausts her own being, and is
 not?

Some such poetic ending one asks of the hero,
 Stamped in the bloody coinage of battle with greatness.
 As the centurial aloe responds to its hour,
 Shooting its petals aloft to the eyebrows of heaven,
 And dying when they die, our natural loves and desires
 All rush or creep on to crises of anguish or rapture.
 After the utmost comes peace — the cup of our nuptials
 We shiver to shards, as knowing too well that life
 brings us

Sordid and slow desecration of symbols most holy.
 Moth and rust gather dim on the white sacramental
 Garment — the body forsaken descends to corruption.

Well held the ancients to their ministration of fire
That rids man's heart and home of their festering bur-
then.

Even the sacrifice brought to bleed at God's altar
Should not survive the mood of devotion that urged it.
They, at once ceasing, shall thus be together remem-
bered.

Why could the man not die with his day of dominion?
His work at end, wherefore live to be scantily pen-
sioned

By hearts that grudge the reward when it follows the
labor?

Are then man's days his own? thou, the languid
survivor

Of pangs and delights that leave nothing to wish for
but dying,

Is it thy fault that a smiling, necessitous patience
Greenly o'ergroweth thy destiny's grandiose ruins?
Had the death-angel stood at the shrine of thy nuptials,
Thou wouldst have laid thy passion-shorn head on his
shoulder,

Glad to weep out thy life and thy sorrow together.
That could not be — from thy scathèd trunk of exist-
ence,

Joy sprang up, the immortal, the ever-perennial,

Bursting through ancient films of reserve and submission,
Bearing aloft in unwonted fragrance and blossom
The force of thy nature, too long in itself darkly circling.
Still the pale stranger will come, not in haste indecorous,
With pinions all ruffled, evoked by thy wild adjuration;
But in state serene; with hands whose soft coolness persuadeth,
And lips that hold their own pause in the music of heaven.

As I walk in the dreary streets of the city,
Voiceless of music, and empty of joy and of beauty,
Meanly adorned for the meaner pleasure of buying,
With such sickly growths as bloom out in the newest
Spring fashion,
Something arrests me — a painful thrill of compassion
Strikes through my heart, ere my wandering reason
can question,
'Wherefore this pang?' 'Tis a print of a face most
familiar
Between the imperial crown and imperial purple;
But oftener seen with the old chapeau and the gray
coat,

Its regal insignia the eye, and the brow, and the lip
then.

The world looked little to him, as you see by his
glances

Embracing it all, and embracing yet more, so I read
them,

The full outpouring of power that stops at no frontier,
But follows I would with I can, and I can with I do it;
While common minds stand agape at the mighty am-
bition,

Nor hear the march till the standards come flashing
upon them.

Know you this man? why, the dome of the Invalides
trembles

When some poor mutilate remnant of soldierly valor
Comes limping towards you, and, touching your arm
with his finger,

Whispers: 'He's there!' and his dead presence fas-
tens upon you

In proportions unearthly, while, choking and swelling,
The heart in your breast with his passionless ashes
claims kindred.

Know you this man? Him even the unwilling Muses
Honored, without whose honor Success is not Tri-
umph.

Marble and canvas grew great with his wonderful features ;

Though best in warrior bronze from his column he towers,

Calmly rebuking the frivolous race that forsook him,
Terribly threat'ning the monarchs that crouched at his bidding.

Thorwald, th' inspired, must fashion the frieze for his chamber,

Dead Alexander hang on the wall as his trophy,
In the Roman palace he deigned not to visit.

Only, nearest Apollo, the sons of the lyre
Scattered more sparsely their homage, as bound to withhold it

Till Death enrolled him among the calm shades of the mighty,

Whom to blame is not cruel, to praise not inglorious.

Then from Italy swept the high mass of Manzoni,
And De Lamartine led the sweet psalm of his vespers.

But here we see him, in sordid and careless attire,
Shabby, forgotten, neglected, an invalid prisoner,
With all his ruined life on his pent bosom resting,
And his lion-like despair on his forehead grown patient.
Sorrow has sickened and shaken, but dare not destroy
him,

Lest she abridge one pang of his long doom of anguish.

In his dressing-gown stands he, his listless feet in
His slippers, a kerchief replacing the crown of an
empire.

Mild-souled Las-Casas writes on, accustomed to hearing
Querulous complaints of unkind and uncourteous treatment,
Meals insufficient, ill lodging, and spies that pursue him
Here even, where fatally wounded to die he has laid
him.

But at this moment, one hopes, from the pitiful present,
Sublime, the past reclaims him with thick-thronging
visions,

Covers with banners and trophies the walls dank and
dreary,

Leads up the barren isle her magnificent vista.

Dreams he, perchance, of a new point of fusion for
Europe,

And in his cabinet models her map and her fortune?

Or has he, choosing a royal name for his infant,

Made Rome, in the palace of Gaul, a subordinate title?

Or 'mid the stir of the camp gives he order for battle,

And sees his plumeless eagle new-fledged in the sun's
face?

'This was at Jena,' he says: 'how we made the dogs
tremble,

Routed their armies,—terror like lightning pursued
them!'

Or: 'This was when I welded my way over icebergs,
And like a warrior's bride lay the fair land before me.'

Or: 'That was when the kings of the world met in
Paris,

Cringing like dutiful slaves at the nod of my pleasure.'

Thus, in Memory's moonlight he harmlessly wanders,
Friend and ancient in shadowy semblance attend him,
Till from her ambush Reality rushes upon him,
Strikes hand to hand, dispersing his phantasmic glories.
By the dull shock awakened, he gathers his senses,
Discerns but understands not himself and his prison ;
Fixes the heart of his hearer with mute looks that
question :

'Surely such things have been?' But the mournful
face answers

The past with the present despair, then he lowers
between them

The leaden vizard of pride, the stern lips lock in
silence,

The breast keeps its broad arches still, and the passing
convulsion

Lies frozen in fathomless eyes that to tears condescend
not.

Break, mighty heart, that, remembering nothing but
greatness,

Look'st on the smallest of worlds, still too large for
thy freedom.

Break, and, in breaking, acknowledge — thy gifts and
thy glories,
The civic wreath, and the bloodier garlands of battle,
The sounding procession, the glittering marches of
triumph
That beggared the treasures of Europe, resistlessly led
thee
To this high court of despair, to this kingdom of
horror,
Where ev'n the silent majesty of thy sorrow
(Over itself still despotic) not wholly exempts thee
From the world's tribute of pity, unwished for and
shameful.

And he, this new Prometheus, wherefore remains he
Held by the torturing will of his dreadful enchainers?
How is he narrowly caged for his captor's diversion,
While the coarse vulture sits leisurely tearing his vitals,
Till his foemen, ashamed of the anguish he suffers,
Would set him free, did their statesmanly maxims
permit it?
Death is the birthright of all men, could he not compel
it?
He who had scattered so widely its terrible largesse,
Had he reserved no delivering drop for his own lip?
Could not a soldier's fate end his great soldier for-
tune?

Ev'n the deserter dies not by the hands of the hang-
man,
Nor pines in dungeons — the weapons he faithlessly
wedded
Stand him in stead, and from grief and dishonor re-
lease him.
What divine word has judged him, God's crystallized
treasure,
The man of the ages, the quickened convulsive out-
worker
Of Nature's deep passive forces, in him grown vol-
canic :
Him, right or wrong, I say, what divine word doth
judge him
Fit only to rot and waste for an Englishman's pleas-
ure ?

In that last battle, when he, the true point of resist-
ance,
(Centre of France, as France was of Europe the
centre,)
He towards whose will all power instinctively gathered,
Thence to re-emanate, great with the stamp of his
purpose,
Holding the past in solution, and sure of the future,
Was by some force undiscernible strangely out-coun-
selled,

It had been easy, one thinks, to have led a wild on-
slaught,

Swift with the rage of desperate-hearted defiance,

Terrible with the intent to be deadly in dying.

He might have flung away life, as a boon of no value,

Lees from a shattered cup, last coin of a great stake

Scornfully swept by the gambler to fill up his ruin.

Proud and contemptuous then had remained his last
gesture,

Death had found him undwindled, had known him
unconquered

By the stern smile congealed on his lips' bloody
marble.

Why died he not? How easy a thing to declare thee!

In all the fiery hail of that dreadful encounter,

Fell there no bullet commissioned of heaven to touch
him.

Destiny, faithfully shielding, through numberless perils

Circled him still, and reserved him to perish by inches.

God's war-angel stooped near him, from battle-cloud
lowering,

Till his deep whisper thrilled the proud heart of the
leader.

After this wise he spake: 'Thus far for thy pleasure;

Now for God's teaching, to thee and to other men in
thee.

Evade it thou canst not, best thou abid'st it in patience.

Fly ! but it follows thee — choose an asylum ! it waits
thee.

And, as he flies, the prophecy darkly attends him.

Seek thee a palace to screen the last act of thine
empire ?

This is not modest enough — thou must abdicate free-
dom.

Give up thy crown ? thou must give up the crown of
thy manhood.

Yield all command ? ay, command not thy boy nor his
mother.

France wilt thou leave ? Somewhat further behind than
thou wot'st of ;

Skies less congenial than these shall grow vengeful
above thee ;

Walls not so stately compress thy last spasm to silence.

In thy desolate sleep and more desolate waking

Spirits unbidden shall question thy will and thine
actions.

Voices that heed not thine anger shall iterate pre-
cepts

Of truths eternal that sit where the stars sit and judge
thee.

Pitiless fingers shall point, neither hating nor loving,

Pointing out simply thy blemishes stript of their halo,

And the great thoughts of God which, involving thy
failure,

Set thee aside as a feather, a fragment, an atom
Inharmonious with infinite laws of Creation.
If they call thee infamous, answer avails not ;
Brazen clamor of trumpets drowns not their still
speaking.

If they smite thee, the folded arms cannot shield thee,
Nor flashing eyes avenge — on thy heart, swift as
lightning,

Falls the keen stroke, the immortal must suffer and
die not.

Suffer till Self, interclouding 'twixt soul and divineness,
Vaporous, huge, phantasmic, condense to its essence.

Suffer till flesh and bone bear the terrible traces,
And the soul sculpture its woe on the walls of its
prison ;

Till the closed eye, and the paralyzed lip, fixed in
dying,

Speak as no tongue could speak, and in piteous plead-
ing

Claim from men's hearts the upheaving of grief for a
brother.'

Further the angel spake — from his dead mask I read it :
'History wrot'st thou in blood, which the angels, tran-
scribing,

Color with light and with shadow by thee unimagined.

They hold the book to thine eyes — thou must learn
 the deep lesson,
 Ev'n as a child that would not with chiding and
 scourging ;
 Till with a wiser heart and a forehead less lofty
 On the steps of the temple thou meet the most gentle,
 Making thee glad with these words : " The long school
 time is over,
 The Father hath sent me — his heart and his mansion
 await thee." ' "

Have I writ long ? and have my wanderings led me
 Spinning frail webs from the thread abrupt of thy
 question ?
 Why died not Kossuth ? Men die as God pleases ;
 Felons and madmen alone anticipate rudely
 The last consummation, and yet from their doom escape
 not.
 Think'st thou thy work at end, and thy discipline
 perfect ?
 Other pangs still remain, other labors and sorrows ;
 Other the crises of Fate than the crises of Being.
 Let me round my words with one brief admonition :
 Take for the bearings of life, thine own or another's,
 This motto, blazoned on cross and on altar : ' God's
 patience.' "

FROM NEWPORT TO ROME.

1849.

YE men and women of the world
Whom purple garments soft enfold,
I've moved among you from my youth,
Decorous, dutiful, and cold.

God granted me these sober hues,
This quiet brow, this pensive face,
That inner fires might deeply glow,
Ungessed without the frigid vase.

Constrained to learn of you the arts
Which half dishonor, half deceive,
I've felt my burning soul flash out
Against the silken web you weave.

No earnest feeling passes you
 Without dilution infinite;
 No word with frank abruptness breathed
 Must vent itself on ears polite.

In your domain, so brilliant all,
 So fitly jewelled, wreathed, and hung,
 Vocal with music, faint with sweets
 From living flower-censers swung;

Thronged by fair women, tireless all
 As ever-moving streams of light,
 Yielding their wild electric strength
 To contact, as their bloom to sight;

I wandered, while the flow of sound
 Made Reason drunken through the ear,
 Dreaming: 'This is soul-paradise;
 The tree of knowledge must be here —

'The tree whose fruitage of delight
 Imparts the wisdom of the Gods,
 Unlike the scanty, seedling growth
 That Learning's ploughshare wins from clods.'

‘And if that tree be here,’ said one,
Who read my meaning in mine eyes,
‘No serpent can so soothly speak
As tempt these women to be wise.’

A sound of fear came wafted in
While these careered in giddy rout :
None heeded — I alone could hear
The wailing of the world without.

’Mid dreadful symphony of death
And hollow echoes from the grave,
It was a brother’s cry that swept,
Unweakened, o’er the Atlantic wave.

It breathed so deep, it rose so high,
No other sound seemed there to be ;
‘Oh ! do you hear that woeful strain ?’
I asked of all the company.

They stared as at a madman struck
Beneath the melancholy moon ;
‘We hear the sweetest waltz,’ they said,
‘And not a string is out of tune.’

Then, with one angry leap, I sprang
To where the chief musician stood ;
I seized his rod of rule, I pushed
The idol from his shrine of wood.

‘I’ve sat among you long enough,
Or followed where your music led ;
I never marred your pleasure yet ;
But ye shall listen now,’ I said :

‘I hear the battle-thunder boom,
Cannon to cannon answering loud ;
I hear the whizzing shots that fling
Their handful to the stricken crowd.

‘I see the bastions bravely manned,
The patriots gathered in the breach ;
I see the bended brows of men
Whom the next deathful sweep must reach ;
I feel the breath of agony,
I hear the thick and hurried speech.

‘ Before those lurid bursts of flame
Your clustering wax-lights flicker pale;
In that condensed and deadly smoke
Your blossoms drop, your perfumes fail.

‘ Brave blood is shed, whose generous flow
Quickens the pulses of the river ;
He, ’neath his arches, muttering low,
‘ It shall be so, but not forever.’

‘ I see the dome, so calm, so high,
A ghost of Greece, it hangs in air,
A Pallas, in the heart of war
It thrones above Life’s coward care.

‘ The walls are stormed, the fort is ta’en,
The city’s heart with fainter throb
Receives its death-stroke — all is lost,
And matrons curse and children sob.

‘ Woe when the arm, so stalwart late,
Tenders the sword-hilt to the foe !
Woe when the form that late defied,
Prostrate, invites the captor’s blow.

‘ The rich must own the hidden hoard,
The brave are butchered where they stand,
And maidens seek, at altar shrines,
A refuge from the lawless hand.

‘ Till Death, grown sordid, hunts no more
His flying quarry through the street,
And the grim scaffold, one by one,
Flings bloody morsels for his meat.

‘ Were Death the worst, the patriot’s hymn
Would ring triumphant in mine ears ;
But pangs more exquisite await
Those who still eat the bread of tears.

‘ Pale faces, prest to prison-bars,
Grow sick, and agonize with life ;
And firm lips quiver, when the guard
Thrusts rudely back some shrieking wife.

‘ Those women, gathering on the sward,
I see them, helpful of each other ;
The matron soothes the maiden’s heart,
The girl supports the trembling mother ;

‘ Sad recognitions, frantic prayers,
Greetings that sobs and spasms smother ;
And “ Oh my son ! ” the place resounds,
And “ Oh my father ! oh my brother ! ”

‘ And souls are wed in nobleness
That ne'er shall mingle human breath ;
Love's seed, in holy purpose sown ;
Love's hope, in God's and Nature's faith.

‘ A flag hangs in the Invalides
That flecks with shame the stately dome ;
“ Ta'en from a Roman whom we slew,
Keeping the threshold of his home.”

‘ And ye delight in idle tunes,
And are content to jig and dance,
When e'en the holy Marseillaise
Sounds for the treachery of France ?

‘ And not a voice amongst you here
Calls on the traitor wrath and hate ?
And not a wine-cup that ye raise
Is darkened by the victim's fate ?

‘ Nor one with pious drops bewails
The anguish of the Mother world ? ’
‘ Oh hush ! the waltz is gay,’ they said,
And all their gauzy wings unfurled.

‘ Nay, hear me for a moment more,
Restrain so long your heedless haste ;
Hearken how pregnant is the time
Ye tear to shreds and fling to waste.

‘ Through sluggish centuries of growth
The thoughtless world might vacant wait ;
But now the busy hours crowd in,
And Man is come to man’s estate.

‘ With fuller power, let each avow
The kinship of his human blood ;
With fuller pulse, let every heart
Swell to high pangs of brotherhood.

‘ With fuller light, let women’s eyes,
Earnest, beneath the Christ-like brow,
Strike this deep question home to men,
“ Thy brothers perish — idlest thou ? ”

‘With warmer breath, let mothers’ lips
Whisper the boy whom they caress, —
“Learn from those arms that circle thee
In love, to succor, shelter, bless.”

‘For the brave world is given to us
For all the brave in heart to keep,
Lest wicked hands should sow the thorns
That bleeding generations reap.

‘Oh world! oh time! oh heart of Christ!
Oh heart, betrayed and sold anew!
Dance on, ye slaves! ay, take your sport,
All times are one to such as you.’

WHIT-SUNDAY IN THE CHURCH.

God's praise on holy Pentecost !
The feast of mystic inspiration
That gave the lost ancestral tongue,
Akin to each dismembered nation.

Men, by convulsive Nature, torn
And held apart, in strange solution,
A moment saw how Man should come
Out of the age's evolution.

Love poured the wine that made them wise,
Love held the torch through damps that smother,
And, in the stranger at his side,
To every man unmasked a brother !

Then Babel's monster discords slank
Like frightened beasts of prey to cover ;
The wolf learned wisdom of the lamb ;
The ministry of wrath was over.

Well may ye range the burnished plate,
And heap white buds on Jesu's altar,
Ringing the solemn chorus out
From Gospel Greek and Hebrew Psalter.

I too will rest me from the load
I bear through all my week-day toiling,
Thankful, in this still house of God,
To shake off worldly dust and soiling.

In penitential Litanies
The deep heart wails out its contrition ;
Remorseful Love, regretful Hope,
Cry up to God for their fruition.

Now praise shall sound — with fuller sweep,
As to a harp more high and holy,
Singeth that ancient tuneful voice :
' God dwelleth with the meek and lowly.'

The sermon now — the heart must still
Its changeful raptures for a season,
And take the bearings of the times,
And follow Faith with patient Reason.

What canst thou say, appointed man,
To help the brave soul's blind desiring?
How wilt thou guide our fervent zeal
To more direct and true aspiring?

'My friends, the day we celebrate
Is that of fear and glory blended,
Whereon the promised Holy Ghost,
To bless God's chosen ones, descended.

'The sad disciples met to pray,
And in intenseness of devotion
Continued till the breath of God
Convulsed the house with mighty motion.

'Then cloven flames upon them came,
Till, from their fiery immersion,
They rose, and spake in unknown tongues,
Arabian, Cretan, Syrian, Persian ;

‘ With superhuman eloquence
The wondrous works of God displaying,
All powers miraculous were theirs ;
Such are the gifts that follow praying.

‘ By you, my friends, be pious thoughts
And prayerful habits cultivated ;
Continue earnest on your knees,
Be with this service never sated.

‘ Frequent the altar, throng the aisle,
Intent the inward flame to foster,
Mingle the Psalm that David sang
With Litany and Paternoster ;

‘ And God, who gave these holy men
The grace of soul that we inherit,
In this appointed way shall pour
On you, likewise, His holy Spirit.’

And this, though more ornate and full,
Was all the burthen of his teaching ;
But heav’nlier wisdom thundered through
The flimsy foolishness of preaching.

From that dead Bible whence he drew,
Reft of their soul, those rhythmic numbers,
Broke the deep organ tone of Time
Unheard in Apostolic slumbers.

And Christ, my Christ, by doctrine slain,
By ritual buried, from his ashes
Breathed out the fervor of his soul,
And swept the aisles and shook the sashes ;

And turned us to the simpler truth
He taught beside the sea's wild splendor,
And showed the meaning of his life
With urgings passionate and tender :

' For song and prayer, the old time had
The Hebrew and the classic Muses ;
I left a rule of work and life,
A work of love, a life of uses.

' The painful labor of my soul
Brought all Life's day within its morning ;
I saw the things that were to be,
And from great height gave timely warning.

‘ That height of holy ravishment
Showed me the pallid Earth that fainted ;
I stretched my hands for help divine,
(Beware ! less prayer with self be tainted.)

‘ Armed from these upward communings,
I stood, God’s champion, before you,
To war with all who wrought you wrong,
And wave heaven’s own protection o’er you.

‘ I stood to tear the lying garb
Which helped the hypocrite deceive you,
To point you where, in majesty,
The calm Truth waited to receive you.

‘ Nor gave I gracious words alone ;
My hands unto my heart bore witness ;
My blessings grew to benefits,
And wrought out Love through Labor’s fitness.

‘ The very current of my blood
Ran so alight with helpful feeling,
That men who thronged me in the crowd
Blessed my unconscious gift of healing.

‘ I loosed the shuddering heart from death,
That on its pulse untimely presses ;
Was careful ev’n lest men should faint
Who followed me in wildernesses.

‘ My voice aroused the impotent,
His limbs from fancied chains ungyving ;
“ Wait not for angels’ help,” I cried,
“ Arise, and strength shall follow striving.”

‘ For humbled woman, too, I spake
A word that saints had left unspoken,
Bade her be judged as man is judged,
And not a hand slung forth its token.

‘ I would have brought so clear a light
Between the slave and his oppressor,
That straight the greater had become
The loving guardian of the lesser.

‘ But when my righteous ire was roused,
I taught no more by gracious fables ;
I scourged the hireling from the shrine,
And overthrew the merchants’ tables.

‘When, sped of God, my fate drew nigh
Along the flinty path of duty,
Calmly I walked to welcome it,
Though veiled in horror was its beauty.

‘I followed it to triumph where
The dull Sanhedrim held its sitting,
To homage rendered by the scourge,
To regal rites, through shame and spitting ;

‘To where, by high and priestly right,
Beyond all human force or malice,
The golden ichor of my life
Was offered from its virgin chalice.

‘There my last earthward utterings
Bequeathed my consciousness of heaven,
As, in the heart of God, I saw,
Dying, man’s claim to be forgiven.

‘Men marked me by the earnest brow,
The arms stretched wide, as blessing, shielding
All, save the naked heart of Love,
Its thrill to every sorrow yielding.

‘What boots your incense to the tree
In mine own fragrant body rooted?
For which of my brave human deeds
Is your dead worship instituted?

‘Think ye, in these portentous times
Of wrath, and hate, and wild distraction,
Christ dwells within a church that rests
A comfortable, cold abstraction?

‘Think ye that here he sits at ease,
And hears himself supremely lauded?
Seek him in less decorous haunts,
Where backs are scourged and limbs are corded.

‘He stands to view the feast of Life,
Whose vials endless sobs are hushing,
While wanton lips the vintage drink,
Wrung from brave hearts by ruthless crushing.

‘Beside the peasant spent with toil,
That sows his seed of life, scarce feeding
His group of famished little ones,
Whose joyless birth has hopeless breeding.

‘Or near that deadlier tainted crew,
Whose painful looms provide you raiment,
Who suffer hell to clothe the world,
And have their nakedness in payment.

‘He stands where earnest minds assert
God’s law against a creed dogmatic,
And from dead symbols free the truth
Of which they once were emblematic.

‘He is where patriots pine in cells,
To felons chained, or faint and gory
Ascend the scaffold steps, to leave
Their children’s heritage of glory.

‘He is where men of fire-touched lips
Tell, to astonished congregations,
The infamies that prop a crown,
And paint in blood the wrongs of nations.

‘He cries : “On, brethren ! draw the sword ;
Loose the bold tongue and pen, unfearing ;
The weakness of our human flesh
Is ransomed by your persevering !”

‘ ’Twas for the multitude I bled,
Not for the greatest, richest, whitest ;
My very cheek, thou knout-armed Russ,
Takes color from the cheek thou smitest ;

‘ My very heart, most Christian prince,
Wakes sullen Spielberg with its sighing ;
My very mother, childless, weeps
Above those brave young Lombards dying.

‘ My very child, since children mark
The earthward ripening of our nature,
Is sold in yonder negro babe,
That ne’er shall know its father’s feature.

‘ The pang of Judas’ deadly sin,
Of Peter’s cowardly forsaking,
Was less than that of Christian stripes,
That wake my wounds to hourly aching.

‘ And when I, passing, see inscribed
My name upon some costly building,
Whose deep aisles open up to shrines
Splendent with purple and with gilding ;

‘ Where pampered priests, with bell and book,
A simulation make of praying,
While the poor, ever-cheated, wait,
Heart-sick with hope, on my delaying ;

‘ I think upon those mocking men
Who call me Monarch, to deride me ;
Think, they who gave the robe of pride
Were ever they that crucified me.’

THE MILL-STREAM.

A MILLER wanted a mill-stream,
A mild, efficient brook,
To help him to his living, in
Some snug and shady nook.

But our Miller had a brilliant taste,
A love of flash and spray ;
And so, the stream that charmed him most
Was that of brightest play.

It wore a quiet look, at times,
And steady seemed, and still ;
But when its quicker depths were stirred,
Wow ! but it wrought its will.

And men had tried to bridle it
By artifice and force ;
But madness from its rising grew,
And all along its course.

'Twas on a sultry summer's day,
The Miller chanced to stop
Where it invited to ' look in
And take a friendly drop.'

Coiffed with long wreaths of crimson weed,
Veiled by a passing cloud,
It looked a novice of the woods
That dares not speak aloud.

Said he : ' I never met a stream
More beautiful and bland,
'Twill gain my bread, and bless it too,
So here my mill shall stand.'

And ere the summer's glow had passed,
Or crimson flowers did fade,
The Miller measured out his ground,
And his foundation laid.

The Miller toiled with might and main,
 Builded with thought and care ;
And when the Spring broke up the ice,
 The water-wheel stood there.

Like a frolic maiden come from school,
 The stream looked out anew ;
And the happy Miller bowing, said,
 ‘ Now turn my mill-wheel, do ! ’

‘ Your mill-wheel ? ’ cried the naughty Nymph,
 ‘ That would, indeed, be fine !
You have your business, I suppose ;
 Learn, too, that I have mine.’

‘ What better business can you have
 Than turn this wheel for me ? ’
Leaping and laughing, the wild thing cried,
 ‘ Follow, and you may see.’

The Miller trudged with measured pace,
 As Reason follows Rhyme,
And saw his mill-stream run to waste
 In the very teeth of time.

‘Fore heaven!’ he swore, ‘since thou’rt perverse,
I’ve hit upon a plan ;
A dam shall stay thine outward course,
And then, break out who can.’

So he built a dam of wood and stone,
Not sparing in the cost,
‘For,’ thought our friend, ‘this water-power
Must not be lightly lost.’

‘What! will you force me?’ said the sprite ;
‘You shall not find it gain ;’
So, with a flash, a dash, a crash,
She made her way amain.

Then, freeing all her pent-up soul,
She rushed in frantic race,
And fragments of the Miller’s work
Threw in the Miller’s face.

The good man built his dam again,
More stoutly than before ;
He flung no challenge to the foe,
But an oath he inly swore :

‘Thou seest resistance is in vain,
So yield with better grace.’
And the water sluices turned the stream
To its appointed place.

‘Aha! I’ve conquered now!’ quoth he,
For the water-fury bold
Was still an instant, ere she rose
In wrath and power fourfold.

With roar, and rush, and massive sweep
She cleared the shameful bound,
And flung to utterness of waste
The Miller and his mound.

BEHIND THE VEIL.

THE secret of man's life disclosed
Would cause him strange confusion,
Should God the cloud of fear remove,
Or veil of sweet illusion.

No maiden sees aright the faults
Or merits of her lover ;
No sick man guesses if 'twere best
To die, or to recover.

The miser dreams not that his wealth
Is dead, as soon as buried ;
Nor knows the bard who sings away
Life's treasures, real and varied.

The tree-root lies too deep for sight,
The well-source for our plummet,
And heavenward fount and palm defy
Our scanning of their summit.

Whether a present grief ye weep,
Or yet untasted blisses,
Look for the balm that comes with tears,
The bane that lurks in kisses.

We may reap dear delight from wrongs,
Regret from things most pleasant ;
Foes may confess us when we're gone,
And friends deny us present.

And that high suffering which we dread
A higher joy discloses ;
Men saw the thorns on Jesu's brow,
But angels saw the roses.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MAY I turn my musings to thee
 In my wintry loneliness?
 May my straggling measure woo thee,
 May my deeper thought pursue thee,
 Till thy sunlight, striking through me,
 Pause to fertilize and bless?

Could I follow once this yearning,
 Thoughts with thee to interweave,
 Thou wouldst give me gentle learning,
 Quick divining, deep discerning,
 Counsel for the darkest turning
 That the Fates unlettered leave.

I, methinks, could speak, unfearing
 Fault or blemish to unfold,
 Blots, the soul's deep beauty blearing,
 Torturous scars, the frail heart searing —
 In such wise and gracious hearing,
 Life's arcana may be told.

Yet the wish can scarce embolden
Timid thoughts to leave my breast ;
Speech is silver, silence golden,
Says the adage wise and olden —
I to thee am so beholden,
I must give thee which is best.

Didst thou ever model slightly
Plastic images of clay,
Touched with grace and feeling sprightly
That a moment might delight thee,
Not too good or precious rightly
To unmake and throw away ?

Hast thou ever paused, despairing,
At a block of Parian stone ?
Life and form within thee bearing,
Dreams of Godlike beauty sharing,
Dimly hoping, faintly daring
To develop the unknown ?

With the powers immortal vying,
Like an infant armed with fate,
Not a blossom born for dying,
Not a song that ends with sighing,
But a presence, Time-defying,
Thou conceivest, to create.

Not to bear ignoble traces
Hath this mountain crystal grown,
But that all celestial graces,
Shining out through marble faces,
Should make glad Earth's lonely places
With a glory of their own.

Friendships fragile and diurnal
I have wrought me in my time,
Out of sympathies most vernal,
Dreams that charm Life's childish journal,
Images of loves eternal
Broken in the play of Time.

But these gifts of Nature's lending
We should hold to permanence ;
Loftier growths, more nearly bending,
Heart more nobly heart befriending,
Eyes that in their deepest blending
Cannot lose their heavenward glance.

Fate's pure marble lies so whitely,
Formlessly, between us cast,
I have wrought and studied slightly —
Thou who knowest all things rightly,
From my heart's love, but not lightly,
Mould a Friendship that shall last.

MOTHER MIND.

I NEVER *made* a poem, dear friend —
 I never sat me down, and said,
 This cunning brain and patient hand
 Shall fashion something to be read.

Men often came to me, and prayed
 I should indite a fitting verse
 For fast, or festival, or in
 Some stately pageant to rehearse.
 (As if, than Balaam more endowed,
 I of myself could bless or curse.)

Reluctantly I bade them go,
 Ungladdened by my poet-mite ;
 My heart is not so churlish but
 It loves to minister delight.

But not a word I breathe is mine
To sing in praise of man or God ;
My Master calls at noon or night ;
I know his whisper and his nod.

Yet all my thoughts to rhythms run,
To rhyme my wisdom and my wit ;
True, I consume my life in verse ;
But wouldst thou know how *that* is writ ?

'Tis thus — through weary length of days,
I bear a thought within my breast
That greatens from my growth of soul,
And waits, and will not be expressed.

It greatens till its hour has come ;
Not without pain it sees the light ;
'Twixt smiles and tears I view it o'er,
And dare not deem it perfect, quite.

These children of my soul I keep
Where scarce a mortal man may see ;
Yet not unconsecrate, dear friend,
Baptismal rites they claim of thee.

THOUGHTS

AT THE GRAVE OF ELOÏSA AND ABELARD, IN PÈRE LA CHAISE.

FAIR saint of passion, placidly reclining,
 Thy glowing breast contained in marble death,
 While Love's soft planet on thy brow is shining,
 A sister heart to thine would lend its breath.

'Tis with a thrill of joy I see beside thee
 The form that might not pass the Convent grate,
 And gather, that the happiness denied thee
 On earth makes blessèd thine immortal state.

Not as Love's votary do I invoke thee,
 Nor as the glorious Sybil of despair ;
 But as the Nun, when deeper voices woke thee
 From thy wild fever-dream to toil and prayer.

I question not of thy young days of rapture,
That earliest thrill fond maidens dare not name,
The frantic, wild pursuit, the daring capture,
The bloom that veiled the bitter fruit of shame,

The gentle strife that masked thy gentler yielding,
The magic words at which thy virtue fell,
Thy woman's heart, adoring, blessing, shielding,
Pardoned for loving, that it loved so well ;

Delights of Love, transcending human measure,
Too tender, too sublime for human worth ;
And then, the weeping o'er thy ruined treasure,
In which thy heart poured all its pulses forth.

This was, and is not — at the altar kneeling,
In the world's widow-weeds, I see thee now ;
The bitter glancing of a smile revealing
The anguish of the suicidal vow.

And here begins to mine thy spirit's mission :
How fared it with thee in thy cloister cell ?
Did heaven console thee with its dreams Elysian ?
Or felt thy plundered heart the flames of hell ?

When thy first force of agony went from thee,
And left thee stunned and swooning, faint and dull,
How did thy garb of holiness become thee?
Was it ennobling? was it weariful?

The saints who were thy refuge, grew they vengeful?
Or smiled they mournfully on thy retreat?
Hadst thou repose after a fate so changeful?
Did God's dear love make expiation sweet?

Say, did that soul of temper so elastic,
Like a bent bow, of its own tension break?
Or did the Chaos of thy thoughts grow plastic,
And from the hand divine new moulding take?

For it was long — through many a tedious morrow
Thy wildered mind its task austere pursued,
Scourged on by Conscience, driven back by Sorrow,
A Queen of Phantoms, ruling Solitude.

At length replied to me that wondrous woman,
With the soft starlight flitting o'er her brow:
'Thou know'st my love and grief were superhuman;
So is my rapture; I possess him now.

‘ What was, I cannot tell — thou know’st our story,
Know’st how we stole God’s treasure from on high ;
Without heaven’s virtue we had heaven’s glory ;
Too justly our delights were doomed to die.

Intense as were our blisses, ev’n so painful
The keen privation it was ours to share ;
All states, all places, barren proved and baneful ;
Dead stones grew pitiful at our despair ;

‘ Till, to the cloister’s solitude repairing,
Our feet the way of holier sorrows trod,
Hid from each other, yet together sharing
The labor of the Providence of God.

‘ Often at midnight, on the cold stone lying,
My passionate sobs have rent the passive air,
While my crisped fingers clutched the pavement, trying
To hold him fast, as he had still been there.

‘ I called, I shrieked, till my spent breath came faintly ;
I sank in pain Christ’s martyrs could not bear ;
Then dreamed I saw him, beautiful and saintly,
As his far Convent tolled the hour of prayer.

‘ Solemn and deep that vision of reunion —
He passed in robe, and cowl, and sandalled feet ;
But our dissevered lips held no communion ;
Our long-divorcèd glances could not meet.

‘ Then slowly, from that hunger of sensation,
That rage for happiness, which makes it sin,
I rose to calmer, wider contemplation,
And knew the Holiest and his discipline.

‘ Oh thou who call’st on me ! if that thou bearest
A wounded heart beneath thy woman’s vest,
If thou my mournful earthly fortune sharest,
Share the high hopes that calmed my fevered breast.

‘ Not vainly do I boast Religion’s power ;
Faith dawned upon the eyes with Sorrow dim ;
I toiled and trusted, till there came an hour
That saw me sleep in God, and wake with *him*.

‘ Seek comfort thus for all life’s painful losing ;
Compel from Sorrow merit and reward ;
And sometimes wile a mournful hour in musing
How Eloïsa loved her Abelard.’

The voice fled heav'nward ere its spell was broken —
I stretched a tremulous hand within the grate,
And bore away a ravished rose, in token
Of woman's highest love and hardest fate.

SYBIL.

YOUR head is wild with books, Sybil,
But your heart is good and kind —
I feel a new contentment near you,
A pleasure of the mind.

Glad should I be to sit beside you,
And let long hours glide by,
Reading, through all your sweet narrations,
The language of your eye.

Since the maternal saint I worshipped
Did look and love her last,
No woman o'er my wayward spirit
Such gentle spell has cast.

Oh ! tell me of your varied fortunes,
For you know not from your face
Looks out strange sadness, lit with rapture,
And melancholy grace.

You are a gem, whose native brilliance
Could never wholly reign ;
An opal, whose prismatic fire
A white cloud doth restrain.

And thus the mood to which you move me
Is never perfect, quite ;
'Tis pity, wonderment, and pleasure,
Opacity and light.

Bear me then in your presence, Sybil,
And leave your hand in mine ;
For, though human be my nature,
You've made it half divine.

THE HEART'S ASTRONOMY.

THIS evening, as the twilight fell,
My younger children watched for me ;
Like cherubs in the window framed,
I saw the smiling group of three.

While round and round the house I trudged,
Intent to walk a weary mile,
Oft as I passed within their range,
The little things would beck and smile.

They watched me, as Astronomers,
Whose business lies in heaven afar,
Await, beside the slanting glass,
The re-appearance of a star.

Not so, not so, my pretty ones,
Seek stars in yonder cloudless sky ;
But mark no steadfast path for me,
A comet dire and strange am I.

Now to the inmost spheres of light
Lifted, my wondering soul dilates ;
Now, dropped in endless depth of night,
My hope God's slow recall awaits.

Among the shining I have shone,
Among the blessing have been blest ;
Then wearying years have held me bound
Where darkness deadness gives, not rest.

Between extremes distraught and rent,
I question not the way I go ;
Who made me, gave it me, I deem,
Thus to aspire, to languish so.

But Comets, too, have holy laws,
Their fiery sinews to restrain,
And from their outmost wanderings
Are drawn to heaven's dear heart again.

And ye, beloved ones, when ye know
What wild, erratic natures are,
Pray that the laws of heavenly force
Would help and guide the Mother star.

A CHILD'S EXCUSE.

IF that I lay my hand upon thine arm,
Detaining thee, be not impatient, friend!
'Tis that thou journeyest, bearing regal gifts,
And I, a beggar, bid thee stand and lend.

Half for myself I ask thy thoughts of thee,
And holy words, that quicken and reprove;
Half that my grateful soul may render back
The seed of wisdom in the growth of love.

Why thou canst give, and I receive, a boon
So blest and blessing, 'tis not mine to tell:
Thou art a free-born creature — light and air
From thee the dungeon-glooms of Life dispel.

That heavenly Art has formed thee thus, I thank
Goodness and Wisdom endless — that to me
Thou art a herald of delight and hope,
I feel deep joy in thanking only thee.

I am but wearing out my feeble hours —
Linger thou long in Manhood's golden prime!
I pass, Life's bankrupt, to eternity;
Stay thou to reap th' inheritance of Time.

But even as now my spirit rises up,
And, bounding, brings its welcome to thine heart,
Thus, when thou, too, shalt cross the icy stream,
I shall feel heavenly virtue where thou art.

And if the lowliest tenant I may be
Of the high precincts of an angel's home,
My mates, some day, shall mark a sudden joy
Transfigure one who cries: 'My brother's come!'

THE ROYAL GUEST.

THEY tell me I am shrewd with other men,
With thee I'm slow and difficult of speech ;
With others I may guide the car of talk,
Thou wing'st it oft to realms beyond my reach.

If other guests should come, I'd deck my hair,
And choose my newest garment from the shelf ;
When thou art bidden, I would clothe my heart
With holiest purpose, as for God himself.

For them, I wile the hours with tale or song,
Or web of fancy, fringed with careless rhyme ;
But how to find a fitting lay for thee,
Who hast the harmonies of every time ?

Oh friend beloved ! I sit apart and dumb,
Sometimes in sorrow, oft in joy divine ;
My lip will falter, but my prisoned heart
Springs forth to measure its faint pulse with thine.

Thou art to me most like a royal guest
Whose travels bring him to some lowly roof
Where simple rustics spread their festal fare,
And, blushing, own it is not good enough.

Bethink thee, then, whene'er thou com'st to me
From high emprise and noble toil to rest,
My thoughts are weak and trivial matched with thine ;
But the poor mansion offers thee its best.

MY LAST DANCE.

THE shell of objects inwardly consumed
 Will stand till some convulsive wind awakes ;
 Such sense hath Fire to waste the heart of things,
 Nature such love to hold the form she makes.

Thus wasted joys will show their early bloom,
 Yet crumble at the breath of a caress ;
 The golden fruitage hides the scathèd bough ;
 Snatch it, thou scatterest wide its emptiness.

For pleasure bidden, I went forth last night
 To where, thick hung, the festal torches gleamed ;
 Here were the flowers, the music, as of old ;
 Almost the very olden time it seemed.

For one with cheek unfaded (though he brings
My buried brothers to me in his look)
Said, ' Will you dance ? ' At the accustomed words
I gave my hand, the old position took.

Sound, gladsome measure ! at whose bidding once
I felt the flush of pleasure to my brow,
While my soul shook the burthen of the flesh,
And in its young pride said, ' Lie lightly, thou ! '

Then, like a gallant swimmer, flinging high
My breast against the golden waves of sound,
I rode the madd'ning tumult of the dance,
Mocking fatigue, that never could be found.

Chide not — it was not vanity, nor sense,
(The brutish scorn such vaporous delight,)
But Nature, cadencing her joy of strength
To the harmonious limits of her right.

She gave her impulse to the dancing Hours,
To winds that weep, to stars that noiseless turn ;
She marked the measure rapid hearts must keep,
Devised each pace that glancing feet should learn.

And sure, that prodigal o'erflow of life,
Unvowed as yet to family or state,
Sweet sounds, white garments, flowery coronals
Make holy in the pageant of our fate.

Sound, measure! but to stir my heart no more —
For, as I moved to join the dizzy race,
My youth fell from me; all its blooms were gone,
And others showed them, smiling, in my face.

Faintly I met the shock of circling forms
Linked each to other, Fashion's galley-slaves,
Dream-wondering, like an unaccustomed ghost
That starts, surprised, to stumble over graves.

For graves were 'neath my feet, whose placid masks
Smiled out upon my folly mournfully,
While all the host of the departed said,
'Tread lightly — thou art ashes, even as we.'

MY SEA-WARD WINDOW.

THE sweet moon rules the east to-night,
To show the sun she, too, can shine —
From his forsaken cell of night
She builds herself a jewelled shrine.

From my lone window forth I look
Where the grim headlands point to sea,
And think how out between them passed
The ship that bore my friend from me.

A track of silvery splendor leads
To where my straining sight was staid ;
It might be there our two souls met,
And vows of earnest import made.

But then, the Autumn's noontide glow
O'er the still sea stretched far and wide,
While kneeling, watching from the cliffs,
'My friend is dear to me!' I cried.

My little children, dancing, cried,
'Why do you kneel, and gaze so far?'
'I kneel to bless my parting friend,
And even ye forgotten are.'

And one might ask, 'What boots this song,
Sung lonely to yon wintry skies?'
It leads me, by a holier light,
Where Memory's solemn comfort lies.

AN APOLOGY

FOR A WARM WORD SPOKEN.

I SPAKE, perhaps, too sharp a word
For one bred up in modesty ;
But base injustice, trivial scorn
On honor heaped, had angered me.

The smile of courtesy forsook
These lips, so timid even for good ;
While o'er the paleness of my brow
Flashed, crimson, the indignant blood.

Nor could I to the contest bring
The trained weapon of the mind,
Snatching from Reason's armory
Such shafts as grief had left behind —

Grief for the faltering of the Age,
Grief for my country and my race,
Grief to sit here with Christian men,
That boast their want of Christian grace.

I say not that the man I praise
By that poor tribute stands more high ;
I say not that the man I blame
Be not of purer worth than I ;

But when I move reluctant lips
For holy Justice, human Right,
The sacred cause I strive to plead
Lends me its favor and its might.

And I must argue from the faith
Which gave the fervor of my youth,
Or keep such silence as yon stars,
That only look and live God's truth.

ENTBEHREN.

Oh! happy he who never held
In trembling arms a form adored!
Oh! happy he who never yet
On worshipped lips love's kisses poured!

Though, worn in weary ways of thought,
Thy lonely soul eat pilgrim-bread;
Though smiling Beauty in thy path
Her banquet of delights should spread,

And bare to thee her rosy breast,
And pour for thee the golden wine
That throngs thy brain with visions blest,
Each than the last more inly thine;

'Tis but the phantom of an hour
That fades before thy waking glance,
And not that high ideal of thought
Which forms the bounds of hope and chance.

Bind not the giant of the soul
By bootless vows to wear a chain,
Whose narrow fetters, pressing close,
Its nobler growth shall rend in twain.

The Infinite, that sees us thus
Mould its transcendent form in clay,
Tramples our idol into dust,
And we afresh must seek and pray.

And thou shalt suffer to be free,
But most shalt suffer to be bound;
Pour, then, the cup of thy desire
An offering upon holy ground.

COQUETTE ET FROIDE.

WHAT is thy thought of me?
What is thy feeling?
Lov'st thou the veil of sense,
Or its revealing?

Leav'st thou the maiden rose
Drooping and blushing?
Or rend'st its bosom with
Kissing and crushing?

I would be beautiful,
That thou should'st woo me;
Gentle, delightsome, but
To draw thee to me.

Yet, should thy longing eye
Ever caress me,
And quickened Fantasy
Only possess me,

Thus thy heart's highest need
Long would I cherish,
Lest its more trivial wish
Pall, and then perish.

Would that Love's fond pursuit
Were crownèd never,
Or that his virgin kiss
Lasted for ever!

COQUETTE ET TENDRE.

To mine arm so closely clinging,
Looking, lingering in mine eyes ;
Say, what hidden thought is bringing
Change of cheek and smothered sighs ?

Oft I think thine hands caress me
With each object that they yield,
And the glances that repress me
Sidelong lure me to the field.

Dost thou own a secret pleasure
When our thoughts half-uttered meet ?
And what calculations measure
These, thy tactics of retreat ?

Seeking, still thou seem'st to shun me ;
Turning hence, our looks still blend ;
Waste no further spell upon me —
Come — what would'st thou of thy friend ?

Not too deeply would I task thee,
Censure none thy woman's art ;
Ask thyself the things I ask thee ;
Fathom thine own doubting heart.

A N S W E R .

'Tis a trick of ancient learning
Riper age effaceth not ;
Youth's warm impulses returning,
Sage-eyed prudence is forgot.

Ere I knew life's sober meaning,
Nature taught me simple wiles,
Gave this color, rising, waning,
Gave these shadows, deepening smiles ;

More she taught me, sighing, singing,
Taught me free to think and move,
Taught this fond, instinctive clinging
To the helpful arm of love.

If there's evil in my bosom,
Aid thou me to keep it down ;
Show the worm within the blossom,
I, like thee, will shrink and frown.

Is our jesting, then, so fateful ?
I'll be colder, if I must ;
Do not chide that I am grateful,
Dare not mock my childish trust.

GRETCHEN TO GOETHE.

‘Nicht küssen, es ist so rauh, aber lieben, wo’s möglich ist.’

NAY, unhand me, gentle stranger ;
For my stainless maidenhood
Bodes me some unproven danger
From a kiss abrupt and rude.

Well I know thou’rt far above me ;
Genius gives thee rank divine ;
But if thou wilt purely love me,
All my grateful heart is thine.

STANZAS.

ACRES of rose-garden swell the slopes of Persia,
 And the blushing summer binds from them her hair ;
 In her veil star-spangled, in her saffron vesture,
 Roses still she gathers, still scatters everywhere.

Roses, many-gathered, yield one drop of attar,
 Fullest concentration and faintness of delight ;
 This the winter treasures, breath of Beauty frozen,
 Soul of sense that summons lost Summer back to sight.

Poets thus that fling us lavish growth of blossoms
 Gift us with their Summer, perishing ere they ;
 They who press life's secret from its pleasures, leave us
 Ravishment unfading, a joy of joys for aye.

ΘΕΟΣ.

HE was — from out the primal darkness
The glancing of his armor shone,
From depth to depth his starry traces
Throughout the great abyss were strown.

He was — ere there was one to worship,
Ere spirit into matter came,
Ere heart had fainted at his greatness,
Ere tongue had trembled with his name.

He was — and human souls came gifted
With this great thought, their dower of birth;
And men in childish fashion cherished
Some symbol that was God on earth.

He was — the upper air contained him,
The sunlight was his smile of grace ;
In wrath he gathered clouds about him,
And loosed the thunder for its race.

He was — prophetic spirits sought him
At isolated mountain shrines ;
His breathing lit volcanic fires,
His whisper stirred the sombre pines.

He was — men writ his deeds in fables,
Priests in his name ruled well or ill ;
Their best of knowledge could but give him
The Sovran Deity of will.

He was — through thoughts and things chaotic,
Through doubt and dreaming, ever new,
Through creed profane and impious temple
Still strangely out of man he grew.

He was — o'er human thought and impulse
Brooding, till that untrammelled sea
Set to the golden tide of duty,
The law of Nature's majesty.

Still must thou brood, auspicious Power !
A tenderer, deeper spell we crave ;
A holy harmony must gather
The billowy Being, wave to wave.

Not pounding precepts dry and dusty,
Like schoolmen wrangling in a gown,
Came those, whom to our grateful knowledge
The ages reverently hand down.

The tasks they wrought were tasks Titanic ;
With strength proportioned to our need,
With mighty sweep of line and plummet,
They laid the basis of our creed.

From high-strung thought to high-nerved action,
Or through the painfulness of art,
Or depth of saintliness outshining,
They grew, the heroes of the heart.

The Prophet on the flaming mountain,
The Sage in Learning's leafy grove,
The Sybil in her awful beauty,
Waited the birth serene of Love.

Then Love appeared, the hope of ages,
Love, sad and strong, with bleeding brow,
Wide-wandering as the fertile waters,
Asking of Earth : ' Why weepest thou ? '

He came ; and men, beneath his urging,
No more in doubt and darkness strode,
But dared one valorous leap to Heaven,
Brought thence Divineness, conquered God.

PHILOSOPH-MASTER AND POET-ASTER.

WHEN I and Theologus cannot agree,
 Should I give up the point, pray you, or he?
 Shall I out-hector him, stubborn and horrid,
 Glowing brick-scarlet from bosom to forehead?
 Give womanly malice for masculine scorn?
 Render sharpness for roughness, and needle for thorn?
 Shall I, whose domain is poetical-quizzical,
 And he, who affects the concrete-metaphysical,
 Degrade the high hobbies that carry us far
 (We're well-mounted, both) to the broomstick of war?
 Or were it not better, for peace and digestion,
 Screnely to rest in the previous question?

Where-unto shall I liken Theologus,
 And myself, unto him not homologous?
 I am a fairy that gives little feasts
 To pitiful, wiful birdlings and beasts,
 To birds that will sing, and to beasts that will roar,
 To pay for their supper, and ask nothing more.

When Theo is good, I delight to delight him,
 And so to my whimsical banquet invite him;
 But, once seated there, how he lays down the law
 With a sweep of his mild and magnificent paw!
 He don't enter into my dishes of trifle
 Any more than a bomb in the bore of a rifle;
 Or if he does enter, he puts his foot in it,
 And marvels of frostwork sink down in a minute.
 If I venture to call for the sparkling Sillery,
 He serves me a salvo of heavy artillery;
 Or I offer some sweet thing: 'I made it myself'—
 He pushes the rubbish, and smashes the delf—
 My terrified guests sit in silence around,
 Their eyes wide with wonder, or fixed on the ground;
 They leave at the earliest signal, that day,
 The Thund'rer has frightened the Muses away.

Where-unto shall I liken Theologus,
 Planning attacks and preparing socdologers?
 Saving the perilous soul of the nation
 By holiest, wholesomest vituperation.
 He is a Vulcan, concede me that, prithee,
 Forging old ploughshares to swords in his smithy;
 Heating, and beating, and hammering out,
 Dealing huge blows and wild sparkles about.
 I, as a vagabond minstrel, appear
 At the smoke-darkened door, and begin: 'Vulcan, dear,

Give over your murderous toil for an hour,
And yield your rude senses to Music's soft power.
I'll peal you a war-song, of foray and fight —
I'll lisp you a love-song, a song of delight —
I'll sing you all songs and all measures I know,
Dear Savage, if you'll leave off hammering so !
So I choose me a song, not superfluously wordy,
And wind up my wandering hurdy-gurdy.
Kling-klang goes the forge, toodle-lootle go I ;
The blows cleave the anvil, the music the sky ;
The full tides of harmony rise and outpour ;
If 'Music have charms,' he is savage no more.
But as warble brings warble, so crash follows crash —
I see his brow steam in the heat and the flash ;
Kling-klang, whing-whang ! he strikes faster and faster :
I am silent ; he cries out : 'Acknowledge your Master !'

Oh yes ! you are foremost at that, if you will,
If a triumph of noise be a triumph of skill ;
But downward comes hammering, upward goes song ;
To this sturdy muscles, to that wings belong.

Where-unto shall my fancy compare him ?
How find a simile that shall declare him ?
I am a jockey, starved, sweated to weight,
And for love, not for money, ride wagers with Fate,

Borrowing a gallop, as oft as I'm able,
 From a certain winged steed of Apollo's own stable.
 Now, when my competitor's distanced and blown,
 And I think the prize goblet is fairly mine own,
 Out starts from the road-side a creature tremendous,
 Of stride and proportion uncouthly stupendous,
 And, on this Phenomenon Paleontologous
 High-perched, who should sit but the doughty Theolo-
 gus ?

The Hypogriff trembles ; I throb to the soul ;
 They pass, and are heralded first at the goal.
 Though my steed and myself seem a mouse and a
 spider

Compared to that hugeness of beast and of rider,
 I try to pluck up some small remnant of courage,
 And at the rude victory make some demurrage.
 Theologus looks from his saddle sublime,
 Saying: ' Peace, feeble nursling of music and rhyme —
 I was putting Leviathan through his great paces ;
 Farewell — we are off for the elephant races.'

MY LECTURE.

A STUDY OF LIFE.

MIGHT I define the pleasure of existence,
 'Twere threefold — effort, yielding, and resistance ;
 In each soft spasm of the thrilling nerves,
 In impulse, which for wide-spread action serves,
 I read, as Sages in the far Divine,
 At every point of life, a mystic trine.

Hence joy of building up, and casting down,
 That fells a forest, fashions out a town ;
 Hence Music's twofold joy, in power that wrings
 Softest agreement from discordant strings,
 And in the gift to feel, through dead'ning years,
 Its heaven-lent passage to the source of tears.

Hence joy of Sight, that pilgrim, wandering far
 To ask of Æther its remotest star ;

That turns from plains whose flowery growths invite,
To rifle mountain-tops of new-fallen light;
Nor can accept the bounty of the sun,
But it untwists to seven his web of one.

Hence joy of conquest, brutal in the rude,
By gentler souls to gracious ends pursued.
As savage creatures rush upon their prey,
Men seize and hurl a brother man to clay.
Could the same strength of will and arm avail
To reconvulse with thought those features pale,
Full many a murderer, past the heat of strife,
Would, with his own, buy back the squandered life.
Such power were rapture! but the rigid corse
Lies starkly, landmark of his wasted force.

This pang remembering, learns th' unfashioned heart
Justice and grace must rule the warrior's art.
Soon waves the banner for some fancied good,
And men take arms to rescue Holy Rood;
Then single saintly martyrs burn or bleed
To conquer in the conquest of their creed.
Last, we apply us, taught of Day and Night,
To emulate the victories of Light;
Imperial countries win through gifts and smiles,
Barbaric homage from unlettered isles;

The world lies girdled with our kind intent,
And Wisdom grows our conquering element.

This love hath subtlest forms, to such dim length
Man feels along his own projected strength,
To where, between blue air and ocean blue,
He weds the old Creation with the new.
In Science, Manners, Art, one instinct guides,
In all that glistening passes or abides ;
To mould his soul in every outward thing,
And dwell, a God, where he is born a King.
Whether he weld his fetters on th' Ideal,
Or chasten to sublimity the Real,
He writes on each fair wonder he doth frame,
'This, by Creative will, from Chaos came ;'
And hangs this sentence on the Minster's door :
'Thus I reach upward, till I learn to soar.'
Nay, ev'n in Death he bends not to his doom ;
His piteous spoil feigns splendor in the tomb ;
His dauntless courage bridges o'er the sky,
And darkly conquers immortality.

Pass we to joy of contrast, the combined
Kaleidoscopic working of the mind,
Whose law lies deeper than our thoughts assume ;
Since Fancy, sitting at her tireless loom

To weave soul-raiment of the thread of Fate,
 By Nature reads to pattern and to mate,
 And blends her bright and dark so cunningly,
 That one without the other could not be.
 Nature, that ministers to this delight,
 And consecrates our pleasure to a right,
 True to her teaching, queenly souls will smile
 To mask themselves in beggar weeds awhile,
 While starving sinners Lazarus might deride
 Hug purple rags, and feed themselves on Pride.

The eagle's wing outstrips the car of Morn ;
 The lark laughs back the eagle's flight to scorn.
 ' Soarest thou sunward ? here I poise and sing,
 And set the heart of heaven a-fluttering.'

As the dull mirror, leaden, shallow, cold,
 Must flush and teem with life it cannot hold ;
 As Echo utters, with unchanging cheek,
 Love's tenderest vow, or Passion's wildest shriek ;
 So minds, by trivial impulses controlled,
 Catch stern contagion from the nobler souled ;
 So heroes shudder, in high-hearted rest,
 To feel the Syren thrilling through their breast.

Mark the wild flashes gloomy natures show,
 That heap Life's fuel for a moment's glow ;

Mark ev'n the sage's armor soothly hit
By the chance arrow of an Idiot's wit.

Delights to kindred pangs their sharpness owe,
Dews to the desert, evergreens to snow.
When wasted Life grows valueless and vain,
Men needs must suffer to enjoy again.
The rapture of a moment's rest, in pain ;
The bitter pelting of the outside storm,
That makes the heart of home so bright and warm ;
The wounds of slanderous tongues, whose poison finds
Such heavenly balm in sympathetic minds ;
The strange intensity that buried loves
Give to a friendship that yet lives and moves ;
Youth grasping Age — Age clinging back to Youth ;
'Tis thus we span th' opposing shores of truth,
And Samson's riddles to all time belong :
'Meat from the eater, sweetness from the strong.'

Woe, were these fostering hindrances removed !
With all we hated, gone were all we loved ;
Vanished were Virtue, with the power to sin ;
Will with necessity, that pent it in.
Could the volcanic spirit burst aside
Its crust of circumstance, and, rushing wide,
Stoop o'er Creation with untrammelled right
To conquer to its bounds of appetite,

A moment's power the effort's self would lend
To rage with whitening fury, fuse and blend ;
Then, conquered by the calm Infinity,
It would disperse, diffuse, and cease to be.

Too little in us the Creative rules ;
Wildly we war with precepts and with schools
That help us to high wants, but put aside
Wishes that feed our solitary pride.
The greatest labor for their master, Man ;
Their loftiest deeds content him as they can.
The few solve problems for the many's doubt ;
The many bind the few to work them out.
Best thoughts should rule in kingdom as in breast ;
And God's compulsive working aids the best.

'Tis thus we keep our fragile house of clay,
Where, let some slightest pressure fall away,
The elemental powers make entrance straight,
Rude victors now where they were slaves but late ;
Ravage the mould and hue of heavenly art,
Ev'n to the sacred chambers of the heart,
And hold their revel in the veiled state
Where Life's high sacrament was consecrate.
Skilled to divide, as beasts to wound and tear,
Each with true instinct singles out his share ;

Assimilative Nature claims the whole,
And flashes back to God th' electric soul.

Here end we seemingly — if one would look
Into our Fate's apocalyptic book,
Read earnest Wisdom through Hope's orient glow,
And construe that we wish by that we know,
Let him give rapt attendance on the dream
Of One * who builded by Earth's master-scheme
New heavens, building out of soul, not sense,
Not for the vulgar deed and recompense,
But judging spirit-destinies by laws,
Faultless as God, of tendency and cause ;
If spirits live, then with close straining eyes
Probing conviction through all mysteries.
To have and hold the truth that underlies
Man's claim of life transcending life, he brings,
From deep analogy of human things,
The inner marvel he had thought to find,
Th' imperishable features of the mind ;
Discerns a subtler current in the vein,
A more transparent tissue in the brain,
Till he can trace, a plan within a plan,
The deep inherence of th' immortal Man,

* Swedenborg.

Maturing from the coarser element
Until God's holy seal of life be rent,
When the rude matrix crumbles from the ore,
And Soul may know what Sense had dreamed before.

Oh! dream of ages, promise of the morn,
Solace of patient grief and tears forborne ;
Oh! sacred right of hope that Nature gave
When Earth's first darling fainted to the grave ;
By thee the soul, from height of ecstasy,
Projects its glory on Infinity.
Thou hast thy promise in all things that are ;
In gifts and powers for life too full and far ;
In the winged Psyche of the chrysalid,
That shows the angel in the human hid ;
In odors and delights of Eastern skies,
That well might deepen to soul-paradise ;
But though all else may bode thee and reveal,
Take from the Christ thy sanction and thy seal.

His incense-balm of being and of breath
Does but condense and concentrate in Death ;
His holy grace of Nature still survives
All mortal doom, to quicken holiest lives.
Unchanged in form and countenance he moves,
Full of the patience of his human loves ;

Tempers the fervent, animates the dull,
Fosters with bosom-warmth the beautiful ;
Upon the thoughtless, soft as angel wings,
Lays his light hand, and deeper musing brings ;
Stands in the path of Sorrow, till erewhile
She must look up, and smile him back his smile.
Earth's martyrs, rapturous, seek the ways he trod ;
And lonely virgins, loving him, love God.
Ev'n this, our mighty hope, too wide, too dim
For creed or dogma, takes its shape in Him.
(Thus speaks he from the endless morning dew :)
' Behold me now, even as I walked with you.
This presence, earnest, truthful, meek, august,
Was that ye loved, not that ye laid in dust.
Doubt not, nor faint as at a phantom strange ;
The death ye see is but the spasm of change —
All forms are shadows, shadow-like pass by ;
The love that is our Being cannot die.'

TRIBUTE TO A FAITHFUL SERVANT.

OH grief! that wring'st mine eyes with tears,
Demand not from my lips a song;
That fated gift of early years
I've loved too well, I've nursed too long.

What boot my verses to the heart
That breath of mine no more shall stir?
Where were the Piety of Art,
If thou wert silent over her?

This was a maiden light of foot,
Whose bloom and laughter, fresh and free,
Flitted like sunshine in and out
Among my little ones and me.

Hers was the power to quell and charm,
The ready wit that children love ;
The faithful breast, the shielding arm,
Pillowed in sleep my tenderest dove.

She played in all the nursery plays ;
She ruled in all its little strife ;
A thousand genial ways endeared
Her presence to my daily life.

She ranged my hair with gem or flower ;
Careful the festal draperies hung ;
Or plied her needle, hour for hour,
In cadence with the song I sung.

My highest joy she could not share,
Nor fathom Sorrow's deep abyss ;
For *that* she wore a smiling air ;
She hung her head and pined for *this*.

'And she shall live with me,' I said,
'Till all my pretty ones be grown ;
I'll give my girls my little maid,
The gayest thing I call my own.'

Or else, methought, some farmer bold
Should woo and win my gentle Lizzie,
And I should stock her house fourfold,
Be with her wedding blithely busy.

But lo! Consumption's spectral form
Sucks from her lips the flickering breath;
In these pale flowers, these tear-drops warm,
I bring the mournful dower of Death.

I waited on the dying girl;
The bitter bloom was on her cheek;
The hollow chorus of the cough
Followed each word she tried to speak.

Her eyes, whose soft expression grew
Death-girdled in a face of stone,
What torch-light of past happiness
Through their sepulchral arches shone!

'Have I abridged thy little life,'
Methought, 'by strength too sorely tried?'
The lustrous eyes made answer straight,
'Hadst thou been here, I had not died.'

Not often to the parting soul
Does Life in dreary grimness show ;
Earth's captive, leaving prison-walls,
Beholds them touched with sunset glow.

In this is Nature fain to be
Religion's helpful ministress ;
Since, whatso'er one bears, 'twere good
One went to God in thankfulness.

And she forgot her sleepless nights,
Her weary tasks of foot and hand,
And, soothed with thoughts of pleasantness,
Lay floating towards the silent land.

The talk of comfortable hours,
The merry dancing tunes I played,
Gay banquets with the children shared,
And summer days in greenwood shade, —

They lay far scattered in the past,
Through the dim vista of disease ;
But when I spake, and held her hand,
The parting cloud showed things like these.

I questioned not her peace with God,
Nor pried into her guiltless mind,
Like those unskilful surgeon-priests
Who rack the soul with probings blind ;
(Too well her brow's clear dial showed
The workings of the thought behind.)

For I've seen men who meant not ill
Compelling doctrine out of Death,
With Hell and Heaven acutely poised
Upon the turning of a breath ;

While agonizing judgments hung
Ev'n on the Saviour's helpful name ;
As mild Madonna's form, of old,
A hideous torture-tool became.

I could but say, with faltering voice
And eyes that glanced aside to weep,
'Be strong in faith and hope, my child ;
He giveth his belovèd sleep.

'And though thou walk the shadowy vale
Whose end we know not, He will aid ;
His rod and staff shall stay thy steps :'
'I know it well,' she smiled and said.

She knew it well, and knew yet more
My deepest hope, though unexpressed,
The hope that God's appointed sleep
But heightens ravishment with rest.

My children, living flowers, shall come
And strew with seed this grave of thine,
And bid the blushing growths of Spring
Thy dreary painted cross entwine.

Thus Faith, cast out of barren creeds,
Shall rest in emblems of her own;
Beauty still springing from Decay,
The cross-wood budding to the crown.

THE JOY OF POESY.

VOICES of care and pleasure, cease!
Harp! thou and I have room at length;
Incline thy sweetness to my skill,
And give back melody for strength.

Oh! not amiss the Master Bard
Is pictured to the vulgar mind
Possessed of inner sight alone;
The poet at his song is blind.

He sees nor circumstance, nor friend;
His listeners press not in on him;
Cloud-rapt in possibility,
His thoughts and ways are far and dim.

Led by the wonder of his theme,
He writes his word in doubt and shade ;
Its glory scarcely shows to him —
Do stars look bright to God that made ?

He leaves, and follows on for more,
By wingèd steed or Stygian boat ;
Men see the letters all in light,
And bless the unconscious hand that wrote.

For sure among all arts is none
So far transcending sense as this,
That follows its own painful way,
And cannot rest in bane or bliss ;

That moulds to more than face or form,
That paints to more than Nature's hue,
And from th' intense of passion brings
The deeply, passionlessly true ;

That, in unlettered ages, read
The thoughts that in God's heavens are ;
Divined the Orient speech of Day,
And told the tale of star to star.

Oh ! tremblingly I sit to sing,
And take the lyre upon my knee ;
Like-child divine to mortal maid,
My gift is full of awe to me.

To sing for praise, to sing for gold,
Or ev'n for mere delight of singing,
Were as if empty joy of smell
Should prompt the censer's fragrant swinging.

Dear Soul of bliss, and bliss of song,
Be thou and song insphered with me ;
Thus may I hold the sacred gift,
Possessing, but possest in thee.

STANZAS.

OF the heaven is generation ;
Fruition in the deep earth lies ;
And where the twain have broadest blending,
The stateliest growths of life arise.

Set, then, thy root in earth more firmly ;
Raise thy fair head erect and free ;
And spread thy loving arms so widely,
That heaven and earth shall meet in thee.

THE DEAD CHRIST.

TAKE the dead Christ to my chamber,
 The Christ I brought from Rome ;
 Over all the tossing ocean,
 He has reached his Western home :
 Bear him as in procession,
 And lay him solemnly
 Where, through weary night and morning,
 He shall bear me company.

The name I bear is other
 Than that I bore by birth ;
 And I've given life to children
 Who'll grow and dwell on earth ;
 But the time comes swiftly towards me,
 (Nor do I bid it stay,)

When the dead Christ will be more to me
 Than all I hold to-day.

Lay the dead Christ beside me ;
 Oh, press him on my heart ;
I would hold him long and painfully,
 Till the weary tears should start ;
Till the divine contagion
 Heal me of self and sin,
And the cold weight press wholly down
 The pulse that chokes within.

Reproof and frost, they fret me ;
 Towards the free, the sunny lands,
From the chaos of existence
 I stretch these feeble hands ;
And, penitential, kneeling,
 Pray God would not be wroth,
Who gave not the strength of feeling
 And strength of labor both.

Thou'rt but a wooden carving,
 Defaced of worms, and old ;
Yet more to me thou couldst not be
 Wert thou all wrapt in gold ;
Like the gem-bedizened baby
 Which, at the Twelfth-day noon,
They show from the Ara Coeli's steps
 To a merry dancing tune.

I ask of thee no wonders,
 No changing white or red ;
I dream not thou art living ;
 I love and prize thee dead.
That salutary deadness
 I seek through want and pain,
From which God's own high power can bid
 Our virtue rise again.

MIDNIGHT.

I LOVE to walk the darkness
On the Midnight's folded arm,
Between Earth's struggling currents
And Heaven's blue depths of calm,

And prove the ghostly terrors,
Which, all too wild for sight,
Throng on the teeming fancy
At the solemn noon of night ;

And mark the mocking contrast
Of the gentle and the loud,
When all the powers of being
To height and crisis crowd.

The saint that, on the housetop,
Tells by the stars his prayer,
Hears the rude Bacchanalian
Profane the slumb'rous air.

The golden hymn of silence
Pauses for his amen ;
But lo ! his lips are palsied
By some Erotic strain.

For midnight lends a passion
To all of soul and sense ;
The wine-cup grows more maddening,
The music more intense.

Then swifter whirl the dancers,
And wilder plays the band ;
More ruthless throws the gamester
Perdition from his hand.

The thief has bolder daring
To force through bolt and bar ;
The man of blood more lightly
Follows his crimson star.

The wanton's haggard features
Glow then through all their paint ;
And paler, in his rapture,
Turns the transfigured saint.

Friends who await the hour,
In memory of the dead,
Drink then the pledge of sorrow,
And break the solemn bread ;

While the maiden, from her lattice,
More timidly doth move ;
Oh ! terrible is Midnight
With the thought of one we love.

Upon my brow and bosom
Let holy lilies lie,
By the child Jesus gathered
In radiant infancy ;

Then, when the midnight fever
Rushes through heart and brain,
I hold them here, I press them there,
And God is felt again.

THE FELLOW PILGRIM.

WHEN I read o'er the lines I traced
When thou and I together were,
My wandering thoughts restrain their haste ;
The power of thy mind is there ;

The mind that laid its grasp on me,
A friendly grasp, but firm and strong,
First from my errors shook me free,
Then led me, brother-like, along,

'Mid lovely sights and holy sounds,
And landscapes smiling green and fair,
To thought and duty's noblest bounds,
And heart's delights, refined and rare.

Beside thee, in the solemn aisle
The anthem's swelling notes I heard ;
There seemed a glory in thy smile,
A lesson in thy lightest word.

The mighty cadence shook my heart
Like a frail pennon in the gale ;
And while I wept and prayed apart,
Thy cheek with strange delight grew pale.

At tombs of poets and of kings
The pilgrim's pious debt I paid ;
Oft as my faint soul spread its wings,
Thy manlier thought did give it aid.

Thou knew'st not then how sick a heart
Essayed the measure of thine own,
Nor how thy probings made it smart
With sorrow to the world unknown.

Be blest of God, and so farewell !
Southward the bird of exile flies,
But in her bosom bears a spell
That changes not with changing skies.

BROTHERHOOD.

I'LL call thee Brother of my soul,
And dream the mother-planet mild
That shone upon thy manhood's dawn
Upon my cheerless childhood smiled.

As oft as thou dost speak of her
With such a fond and duteous love,
' Thus might my son remember me !'
I ask of Him who reigns above.

But out of Chaos half-matured,
In me Life's saddest discords blend ;
I am God's orphan and the world's ;
Even thou shalt scarcely rest my friend.

And yet thou art so large of heart,
So free of generous sympathy,
That sometimes by thy passing breath
A drooping flower revived may be.

THE DEATH OF THE SLAVE LEWIS.

IN the deep sanctuary of sheltering night,
Kept by the angels of the stars serene,
The meanest hireling holds his vested right —
Mourner, slave, culprit, lose from thought and sight
The weight of grief that shall be, or hath been.

Within its walls young lovers tune their strings,
And ravished saints breathe adoration deep;
But softly prayer and song unfold their wings,
Lest ev'n the full heart's upward murmurings
Too rudely cross the silver spell of sleep.

From out that holy realm of night a shriek,
As of a soul in Hades, rent the veil
Of silence — then a prophet seemed to speak,
To anger roused — not 'Turn the unsmitten cheek,'
But, 'Blood for blood!' answered the dismal wail.

And then I heard a piteous creature lift
His agonizing pleadings where he stood
Bound, naked, marked with many a bloody rift,
While blows urged out, in torture cries, his shrift
To one with drunken fury in his blood.

The brute but flogged the harder for his cry ;
It gave the horrid sport a keener zest :
It is appointed once for man to die ;
But what the crime, the agony, say I,
When twenty murders tear one bleeding breast ?

‘ They beat him with a broad, flat thong ’ — ’tis urged —
‘ For all security of life and limb.’
Brethren, was He, by whom men’s sins are purged,
Ev’n thus with a broad leather merely scourged,
Why waste our womanish hearts their throbs on him ?

Blows rained upon him till his yielding brain
Had fashioned out the tale they wished to learn
In dreadful inspiration of his pain —
They left him, gibbet-wise, within his chain,
To scourge a brother victim, and return.

They set a man to watch him, they aver,
Who, as men will, forsook his misery ;
But while he staid, unless his statement err,
Not rest nor healing craved the sufferer ;
But, ' Can you lend me any help to die ? '

Blind Nature has an instinct to be free ;
Despair is mighty, though her hands be tied ;
Howe'er he bowed his head and bent the knee,
(The action has a dark sublimity,)
The black man gathered up his strength, and died.

They left thee, Lewis, with thy wounds all warm ;
But when they came to heap thy measure o'er,
Free in the fetters hung thy passive form.
Oh ! theirs the crime, if in hate's wildest storm
Thy soul, unbidden, sought th' eternal shore.

Priests tell us of the guilt of suicide —
Let the word pause upon the untried tongue !
They stormed life's citadel, ill-fortified,
Till the vexed soul fled, powerless to abide,
And Death's pale flag of truce aloft was flung.

Death was thy champion : 'neath his icy shield
Thy rescued body laughed the whip to scorn ;
While by those wound-mouths, never to be sealed,
Thy soul unto the Ever Just appealed,
Cried out to God, 'Remember what I've borne !'

Where stays avenging Justice ? Why compel
Our hearts to seek her in th' abyss below ?
Shuddering, our eyes look downwards for a hell,
Since Judge and Jury's fiat flatly fell :
'A slave the victim ? Let the white man go !'

It is no murder when unsanctioned force
Wastes a poor negro's life beneath the thong
In your brave South. Where freer law has course,
A man who toys too rudely with his horse
Is held a culprit, and acquits the wrong.

But there must be a hell, as thou shalt know
By all its furies loosed within thy breast.
Remorse shall feed on thee his hunger slow ;
Or, art thou for her craving sunk too low,
Spectres of fear shall scare thee from thy rest.

The curse of Cain shall hunt thy wandering thought
To frantic haste, to fainting weariness.
Lookest thou earthward, blood is there unsought ;
Skyward, the clouds th' avenging hue have caught,
And mock, like crimson monsters, thy distress.

Scourging for scourging, but in keener kind ;
And death for death, but in a living grave ;
While, from th' uneasy torment of thy mind,
Thou shalt behold and envy, peace enshrined,
The placid phantom of thy murdered slave.

Ev'n though thou babble from the mystic book,
And taste the sacred symbols of thy creed,
Let Christ's black brother from the altar look,
Faint, falter, 'neath his withering rebuke —
The heavenly food can poison, too, at need.

I pause, unwilling further to rehearse
Thy needs, or shut thee from God's clemency ;
Rather I'll weep, and wish thee nothing worse
Than that, returning blessing for thy curse,
Thy victim's soul may plead with God for thee.

ASHES OF ROSES.

'Tis noon — the little shepherdess doth watch her flock
at play,
And thanks the gladsome summer for its best and
brightest day ;
* From time to time her happy thoughts in simple song
she weaves,
And twines from out her tiny hands her garland of
green leaves.

How green the grass is growing ! and the flowers, how
bright they bloom !
The stream shall be my looking-glass — the dell my
tiring-room ;
And yon, amid the mountains, where my eye cannot
see,
Oh ! is there not a winsome youth who kindly thinks
of me ?

And now, across the noontide sky, a cloud its shadow
flings ;

Still, in the gladness of her heart, the little maiden
sings

A song of plaintive melody — a song of olden time —
While softly to her voice keeps tune the distant village
chime.

But sudden from the dark, thick cloud, the tempest's
might hath rushed ;

Leaps the wild lightning, and the song upon her lips is
hushed ;

She throws back her bright tresses, for the air is close
and warm,

And looks with quiet rapture on the glory of the storm.

Then, from the darkness of the skies, a voice of terror
spake,

And to its fearful message bade the mountain echoes
wake —

Another and a louder crash, more fearful than the
rest !

The maiden bent her head, and clasped her hands upon
her breast.

Another! and she raised the lustrous beauty of her
eye,

And its steadfast look said, 'Father! I do not fear to
die!'

Another! and with gentlest sigh, with softest sigh of
prayer,

The child had breathed her happy soul upon the sum-
mer air!

And from the mountain's rugged breast there burst a
wailing wild;

They sang their own rude lullaby, and sorrowed o'er
their child;

But deep from out their strong-holds a sadder voice
shall come,

When the sweet blighted flower is borne unto her silent
home.

The anger of the storm is spent — 'tis sunshine on the
plain;

It plays around the form of her it may not warm
again;

And what, of all it looks upon, hath such a tender
grace

As that fair head, laid low for aye, and that sweet,
upturned face?

Sweet Marian! the flowers shall mourn the playmate
of their love ;
The trees shall miss thy music, and the singers of the
grove ;
Thy parents weep as parents weep ; and from one
heart, this day,
With its unlooked-for bitterness, shall never pass
away.

In mute surprise and wonderment thy flock around
thee stand ;
They miss the cheering of thy voice, the guiding of
thy hand ;
While thou art hid within the arms, and shielded on the
breast,
Of Him who leads his tender lambs in the green fields
of rest.

Yet surely should the parent's voice be welcome to the
child,
Whether it come at noon or night, in gentle tones
or wild ;
And I, Oh Father! when Thy will shall call my soul
away,
May I as calmly hear Thy word, as placidly obey !

HANDSOME HARRY.

WHY must we look so oft abaft?
What is the charm we feel
When handsome Harry guides the craft,
His hand upon the wheel?

His hand upon the wheel, his eye
The swelling sail doth measure:
Were I the vessel he commands,
I should obey with pleasure.

Whether he tumbles to the top,
Or in the rigging stands,
I must admire his agile feet,
His ready, willing hands.

He would seem taller, were he not
In such proportion made ;
He wears as fair and free a brow
As golden curls can shade.

Fresh youth, and joyance, and kind heart
Gleam in his azure eye ;
And though I scarcely know his voice,
I think he cannot lie.

More graceful is his shirt of blue
Than your best Paris coat ;
It drapes his manly shoulders well,
Displays his rounded throat.

He seems a glowing Mercury
Just lighted from the sun ;
But Harry stands on two trim feet,
And Mercury on one.

From boyhood's days, the ocean wave
Has cradled him to sleep ;
He is a true salt-water babe,
An orphan of the deep.

And he can win a maiden's ear,
They say, with ready art ;
But who would trust to sailors' vows,
True pirates of the heart ?

Yet, when I see him at the helm
With heaven about his eyes,
I think he's fit to guide our ship
To nought but Paradise.

THE MASTER.

SOMETIMES, in the brilliant strife
Of the wise and witty,
One who pleads not for himself
Breathes divinest pity.

Sometimes, where fierce speakers hurl
Loud denunciation,
One clear whisper calms men's hearts
To appreciation.

Where the high-tuned viols meet
In most rapturous swelling,
Passes one who holds the thought
Mystic strains were telling.

'Mid the busy haunts of men,
'Mid their festal dances,
Where the eye betrays no heart
Deeper than its glances,

I have seen a broader brow,
More serene and higher,
Eyes wherein an after-thought
Chastens native fire.

I, who bow not to the priest
Lean, or fed to sleekness,
Bend to one who holds of Christ
Wisdom, love, and meekness.

When his intercession mild
Hushed the critic's pæan,
He had caught a gentle tone
From the Galilæan.

When his words of higher faith
Shamed the Calvinistian,
He, were he baptized or not,
Answered like a Christian.

When his eye detected me
In the world's vain glitter,
And his look said: ' Here is one
Whose garments do not fit her ;

' She who stakes an hour on cards
Risks a holier treasure ;
She who scatters shining words
Gathers pain for pleasure ;'

Then my world-enfrozen heart
Faster beat, and faster ;
As I looked upon the Man,
I beheld the Master.

MORTAL AND IMMORTAL.

OH! life is strange, and full of change,
But it brings me little sorrow ;
For I came to the world but yesterday,
And I shall go hence to-morrow.

The wind is drear, the leaves are sear,
Full dimly shows the sun,
The skies are bright, the earth is light ;
To me 'tis almost one.

The sunny rill, the wave dark and chill,
Across my breast may roll ;
The saddest sigh, the merriest cry,
Make music in my soul.

A few short years of smiles and tears,
Of suffering not in vain,
And the weary smart of a wounded heart
I never shall know again.

I've wept for the bride at her husband's side ;
I've smiled on the loved one's bier ;
For a mystery was shown to me,
A thing of hope and fear.

Who sows in tears his early years
May bind the golden sheaves ;
Who scatters flowers in summer bowers
Shall reap but their withered leaves.

A wayward child, on whom hath smiled
The light of heavenly love ;
A pilgrim with a vision dim
Of something far above ;

I live for all who on me call,
And yet I live for one ;
My song must be sweet to all I meet,
And yet I sing to none.

A quiet tone, that maketh known
A spirit passing by,
A breath of prayer on the midnight air,
And I am gone for aye ;

Gone to the rest of the ever blest,
To the new Jerusalem,
Where the children of light do walk in white,
And the Saviour leadeth them.

Forever gone, and none to mourn ;
And who for me would sorrow ?
I came to toil in a desert soil,
And my task will be done to-morrow.

WHAT I SAID TO THE DYING ROSE, AND
WHAT SHE SAID TO ME.

SWEET Rose, it is thy dying day !
Ere nightfall thou must pass away,
 And my soul for thee grieves ;
For I have found a record dear,
Traced by the hand I love and fear,
 Upon thy silken leaves.

Thou hast so smiled upon my heart,
That I can scarcely from thee part
 Without a tear of sorrow ;
For I shall come thy cup to kiss,
And my beloved companion miss,
 Forever gone, to-morrow.

It seemed to me thy lingering
Made Autumn lovelier than Spring,
 With a sad loveliness ;

On thy pale leaves a golden glow
Spake of the sunlight on the snow,
Of joy in bitterness.

Thy little hour of beauty's o'er,
And I, like thee, shall be no more
Ere many days are numbered ;
But I shall rise to regions blest,
And so will all who on the breast
Of holy faith have slumbered.

Is there another life for thee,
That thou so uncomplainingly
Dost languish unto death ?
Oh, tell me, does an unseen Hand
Bear to the bright and better land
Thy tender parting breath ?

Thy fragrance dropped from angels' wings ;
Thy beauty from the same source springs
With all I love and cherish ;
The hills, the plains, the stars, the sun,
The fair forms I have looked upon,
That change, but cannot perish.

Dost thou not eloquently look
A promise from the mighty book
 Writ in immensity?
Thought of the universal Soul,
Thyself a fragment and a whole,
 A truth, a mystery?

The dead shall rise, the heavens shall burn,
The earth be melted, yet return
 . A new and glorious birth :
Oh, say that thou wilt live again,
And I, methinks, with less of pain,
 Shall see thee fall to earth.

Speak from thy softly-rounded bell,
Whereon, as though a pearly shell,
 The morning light still gloweth ;
And as the fair leaves dropped away,
Methought that each did seem to say,
 ‘I cannot tell — God knoweth.’

Methinks that there should be no death ;
For all that liveth hath the breath
 Of One who cannot die ;
The robes of glory He hath worn
Are never thrown aside in scorn,
 But lovingly laid by.

All that the future darkly holds,
All the sepulchral past unfolds,
 All that this hour must be ;
The soul that seeks in Him its sun,
The flower whose little race is run,
All things that He hath made, are one
 With His eternity.

Methinks we will not mourn again,
Nor murmur, while life's varied chain
 Our Father's glory showeth ;
The blessedness that we have known,
The tears that we have wept alone,
Gather like incense round the throne
 Of Him who all things knoweth.

And Thou, my widowed bridal Rose,
Whose pallid leaves the wound disclose
 From which thy heart's blood floweth,
Thou asketh why the grave doth hide
The form that was thy life, thy pride,
Why thou should'st be so sorely tried :
 ' I cannot tell — God knoweth.'

VISIONS.

I HAVE read in old narrations
How the Godhood came to men ;
Led in war the ancient nations,
Taught the arts of peace and gain.

Now a virgin, helmet shielded,
Points from clouds her warrior spear ;
Now the torch, by Ceres wielded,
Sheds the blessing of the year.

Now, amid Olympian thunders,
Jove's portentous bolts are hurled ;
Vulcan works his dingy wonders ;
Cypris' smile enslaves the world.

Dearer visions show the gesture
Of a God who deigns to hide
Traits divine in homely vesture
At the peasant's fireside ;

Fathoms secrets without asking,
Sees the thought confessed to none ;
Heavenly largesse ends his masking,
Men discern him when he's gone.

Sometimes when alone I ponder
On that outlet of the soul,
Hid in Northern night and wonder,
Armed with sunken reef and shoal ;

Fear lest evil should betide me
On that wide and viewless sea,
Lest some flattering light misguide me,
That I perish utterly ;

Gentlest harmony breathes o'er me,
Bringing answer to my prayer ;
Through the eyelids closed before me,
Shadowed, the Divine is there.

In the guise of human natures,
Folded round his deep heart now,
Manhood gracious in his features,
Godhood glorious on his brow.

Still he sits beside the embers,
Fills serene the ancient chair,
Which my orphaned heart remembers
Silvered by an old man's hair.

Hist! the household all is sleeping—
I'm in trances deeper far,
'Didst thou hear my distant weeping,
Cristo, che son misera?'

'By these eyes' unbidden filling,
By this love that passeth fear,
By this silence, soul-enthalling,
I discerned that thou wert near;

'Felt the holy grace and goodness
That vouchsafed thee to my sight,
Quieting Life's rush and rudeness
With a calm and pure delight.'

‘ Bless me with those hands that scattered
Fulness to the fainting crowd ;
Speak, as from the bark, storm-shattered,
To the demon of the cloud.

‘ Nay, my Cristo, help me only
To a striving after good ;
Faints my heart in love so lonely,
Fails the earnest, hopeful mood.

‘ Hold in check these nerves so frantic
When the current counter runs ;
Give me patience with each antic
Of the wild and thoughtless ones.

‘ If Displeasure, sourly looking
From stern eyelids, wounds my pride,
Let me hear thy mild rebuking,
And the pang in silence hide.

‘ Clearer vision, joys ecstatic,
I resign for humbler state ;
But let Life be emblematic
Of the soul’s immortal fate.’

Oftener, my confession sighing,
Sobbing, struggles from my breast ;
And that gentle One, replying,
Calms me to unearthly rest.

Dimly though my soul discerneth
What those pure lips smile or say,
With a glad consent she turneth
Where the raised hand points the way ;
Hopefully the pilgrim learneth
She must walk to meet the day.

Then Life rises to entomb me ;
Waking, I am all alone ;
Half I feel Christ passes from me,
Half I deem he is not gone.





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